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Mathological Element of Indian Temples

Laxmi Singh

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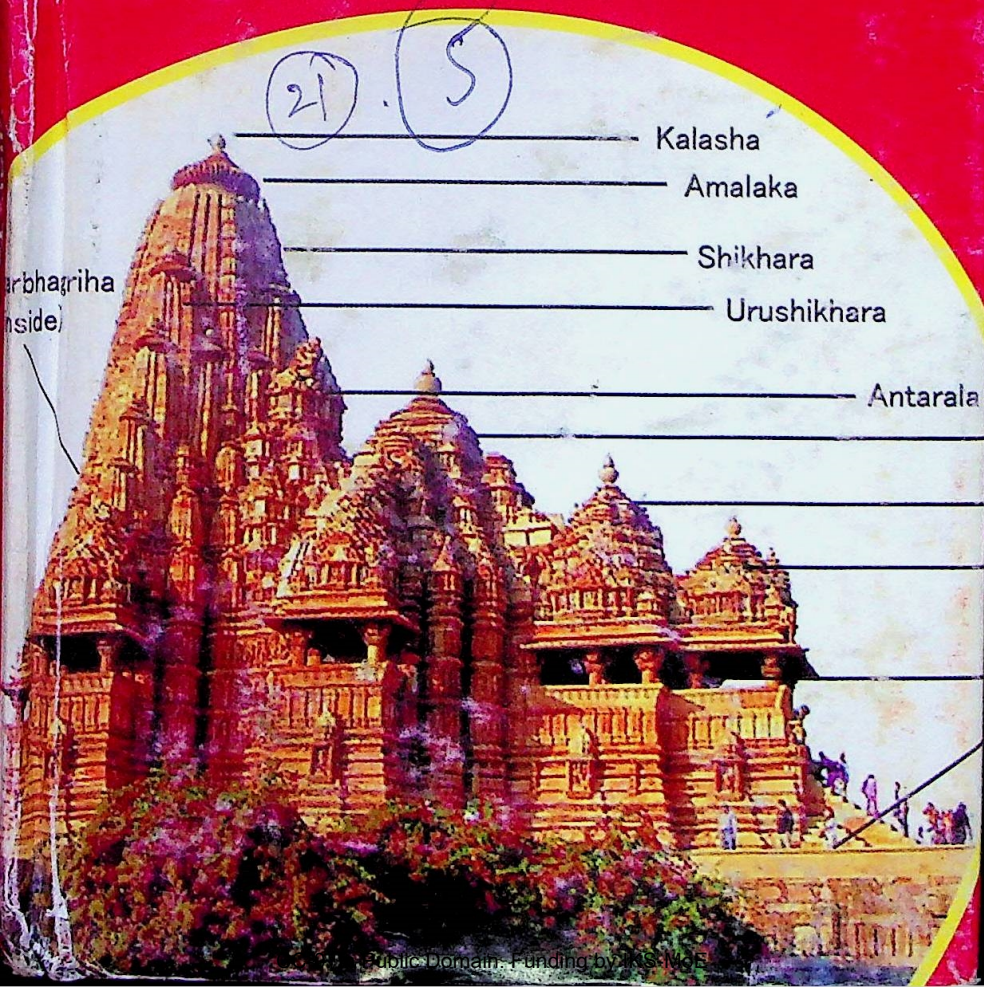

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Mathological Element of Indian Temple

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Preface

In the Vedic period there were no temples. The main object of worship was fire that stood for God. This holy fire was lit on a platform in the open air under the sky, and oblations were offered to the fire. It is not certain when exactly the Indo-Aryans first started building temples for worship. The scheme of building temples was perhaps a concomitant of the idea of idol worship. The earliest temple structures were not made of stones or bricks, which came much later. In ancient times, public or community temples were possibly made of clay with thatched roofs made of straw or leaves. Cave-temples were prevalent in remote places and mountainous terrains.

According to historian, Nirad C Chaudhuri, the earliest structures that indicate idol worship date back to the 4th or 5th century AD. There was a seminal development in temple architecture between the 6th and the 16th century.

The architecture of Hindu temples evolved over a period of more than 2,000 years and there is a great variety in this architecture. Hindu temples are of different shapes and sizes – rectangular, octagonal, semicircular – with different types of domes and gates. Temples in southern India have a different style than those in northern India. Although the architecture of Hindu temples is varied, they mainly have many things in common.

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This growth phase of Hindu temples charts its rise and fall alongside the fate of the various dynasties that reigned India during the period majorly contributing and influencing the building of temples, especially in South India. Hindus consider the building of temples an extremely pious act, bringing great religious merit. Hence kings and wealthy men were eager to sponsor the construction of temples, notes Swami Harshananda, and the various steps of building the shrines were performed as religious rites.

—Author

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1

Introduction

A temple or mandir is a structure designed to bring human beings and gods together, using symbolism to express the ideas and beliefs of Hinduism. The symbolism and structure of a Hindu temple are rooted in Vedic traditions. A temple incorporates all elements of Hindu cosmos - presenting the good, the evil and the human, as well as the elements of Hindu sense of cyclic time and the essence of life - symbolically presenting dharma, kama, artha, moksa and karma.

The spiritual principles symbolically represented in Hindu temples are given in the ancient Sanskrit texts of India (for example, Vedas and Upanishads), while their structural rules are described in various ancient Sanskrit treatises on architecture (Brhat Samhita, Vastu Sastras). The layout, the motifs, the plan and the building process recite ancient rituals, geometric symbolisms, and reflect beliefs and values innate within various schools of Hinduism. A Hindu temple is a spiritual destination for many Hindus, as well as landmarks around which ancient arts, community celebrations and economy have flourished.

Hindu temples come in many styles, are situated in diverse locations, deploy different construction methods and are adapted to different deities and regional beliefs, yet almost all of them share certain core ideas, symbolism and themes. They are found in South Asia particularly India and Nepal, in southeast Asian countries such as Cambodia, Vietnam and

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islands of Indonesia and Malaysia and countries such as Fiji, Mauritius, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean, Suriname, South Africa, Europe and North America with a significant Hindu community. The current state and outer appearance of Hindu temples reflect arts, materials and designs as they evolved over several millennia; they also reflect the effect of conflicts between Hinduism and Islam since the 12th century.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DUMM AND MEANING OF A HINDU TEMPLE

Hindu temple reflects a synthesis of arts, the ideals of dharma, beliefs, values and the way of life cherished under Hinduism. It is a link between man, deities, and the Universal Purusa in a sacred space.

The 9x9 (81) grid "Parama Sayika" layout plan (above) found in large ceremonial Hindu Temples. It is one of many grids used to build Hindu temples. In this structure of symmetry, each concentric layer has significance. The outermost layer, Paisachika padas, signify aspects of Asuras and evil; while inner Devika padas signify aspects of Devas and good. In between the good and evil is the concentric layer of Manusha padas signifying human life; All these layers surround Brahma padas, which signifies creative energy and the site for temple's primary idol for darsana. Finally at the very center of Brahma padas is Grabhgriya (Purusa Space), signifying Universal Principle present in everything and everyone.

In ancient Indian texts, a temple is a place for Tirtha - pilgrimage. It is a sacred site whose ambience and design attempts to symbolically condense the ideal tenets of Hindu way of life. All the cosmic elements that create and sustain life are present in a Hindu temple - from fire to water, from images of nature to deities, from the feminine to the masculine, from the fleeting sounds and incense smells to the eternal nothingness yet universality at the core of the temple.

Susan Lewandowski states that the underlying principle in a Hindu temple is built around the belief that all things are one, everything is connected. The pilgrim is welcomed through 64-grid or 81-grid mathematically structured spaces, a network

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of art, pillars with carvings and statues that display and celebrate the four important and necessary principles of human life - the pursuit of artha (prosperity, wealth), the pursuit of kama (pleasure, sex), the pursuit of dharma (virtues, ethical life) and the pursuit of moksha (release, self-knowledge). At the center of the temple, typically below and sometimes above or next to the deity, is mere hollow space with no decoration, symbolically representing Purusa, the Supreme Principle, the sacred Universal, one without form, which is present everywhere, connects everything, and is the essence of everyone. A Hindu temple is meant to encourage reflection, facilitate purification of one's mind, and trigger the process of inner realization within the devotee. The specific process is left to the devotee's school of belief. The primary deity of different Hindu temples varies to reflect this spiritual spectrum.

In Hindu tradition, there is no dividing line between the secular and the sacred. In the same spirit, Hindu temples are not just sacred spaces, they are also secular spaces. Their meaning and purpose have extended beyond spiritual life to social rituals and daily life, offering thus a social meaning. Some temples have served as a venue to mark festivals, to celebrate arts through dance and music, to get married or commemorate marriages, commemorate the birth of a child, other significant life events, or mark the death of a loved one. In political and economic life, Hindu temples have served as a venue for the succession within dynasties and landmarks around which economic activity thrived.

The forms and designs of Hindu Temples

Almost all Hindu temples take two forms: a house or a palace. A house-themed temple is a simple shelter which serves as a deity's home. The temple is a place where the devotee visits, just like he or she would visit a friend or relative. In Bhakti school of Hinduism, temples are venues for puja, which is a hospitality ritual, where the deity is the honored, and where devotee calls upon, attends to and connects with the deity. In other schools of Hinduism, the person may simply perform jap, or meditation, or yoga, or introspection in his or her temple.

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A palace-themed temples are more elaborate, often monumental architecture.

The site

The appropriate site for a temple, suggest ancient Sanskrit texts, is near water and gardens, where lotus and flowers bloom, where swans, ducks and other birds are heard, where animals rest without fear of injury or harm. These harmonious places were recommended in these texts with the explanation that such are the places where gods play, and thus the best site for Hindu temples.

The gods always play where lakes are, where the sun's rays are warded off by umbrellas of lotus leaf clusters and where clear waterpaths are made by swans whose breasts toss the white lotus hither and thither, where swans, ducks, curleys and paddy birds are heard, and animals rest nearby in the shade of Nicula trees on the river banks.

The gods always play where rivers have for their braclets the sound of curleys and the voice of swans for their speech, water as their garment, carps for their zone, the flowering trees on their banks as earrings, the confluence of rivers as their hips, raised sand banks as breasts and plumage of swans their mantle.

The gods always play where groves are near, rivers, mountains and springs, and in towns with pleasure gardens.

— *Brhat Samhita 1.60.4-8, 6th Century CE*

While major Hindu temples are recommended at sangams (confluence of rivers), river banks, lakes and seashore, Brhat Samhita and Puranas suggest temples may also be built where a natural source of water is not present. Here too, they recommend that a pond be built preferably in front or to the left of the temple with water gardens. If water is neither present naturally nor by design, water is symbolically present at the consecration of temple or the deity. Temples may also be built, suggests Visnudharmottara in Part III of Chapter 93, inside caves and carved stones, on hill tops affording peaceful views, mountain slopes overlooking beautiful valleys, inside forests and hermitages, next to gardens, or at the head of a town street.

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The manuals

Ancient builders of Hindu temples created manuals of architecture, called Vastu-Sastra (literally, science of dwelling, Vas-tu is a composite Sanskrit word Vas means reside, tu means you); these contain Vastu-Vidya (literally, knowledge of dwelling). There exist many Vastu-Sastras on the art of building temples, such as one by Thakkura Pheru, describing where and how temples should be built. By the 6th century AD, Sanskrit manuals for constructing palatial temples were in circulation in India. Vastu-Sastra manuals included chapters on home construction, town planning, and how efficient villages, towns and kingdoms integrated temples, water bodies and gardens within them to achieve harmony with nature. While it is unclear, states Barnett, as to whether these temple and town planning texts were theoretical studies and if or when they were properly implemented in practice, the manuals suggest that town planning and Hindu temples were conceived as ideals of art and integral part of Hindu social and spiritual life.Ancient India produced many Sanskrit manuals for Hindu temple design and construction, covering arrangement of spaces (above) to every aspect of its completion. Yet, the Silpins were given wide latitude to experiment and express their creativity.

The Silpa Prakasa of Odisha, authored by Ramacandra Bhattaraka Kaulacara sometime in ninth or tenth century CE, is another Sanskrit treatise on Temple Architecture. Silpa Prakasa describes the geometric principles in every aspect of the temple and symbolism such as 16 emotions of human beings carved as 16 types of female figures. These styles were perfected in Hindu temples prevalent in eastern states of India. Other ancient texts found expand these architectural principles, suggesting that different parts of India developed, invented and added their own interpretations. For example, inSaurastra tradition of temple building found in western states of India, the feminine form, expressions and emotions are depicted in 32 types of Nataka-stri compared to 16 types described in Silpa Prakasa. Silpa Prakasa provides brief introduction to 12 types of Hindu temples. Other texts, such as Pancaratra Prasada

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Prasadhana compiled by Daniel Smith and Sīlpa Ratnakara compiled by Narmada Sankara provide a more extensive list of Hindu temple types.

Ancient Sanskrit manuals for temple construction discovered in Rajasthan, in northwestern region of India, include Sutradhara Mandana's Prasadamandana (literally, manual for planning and building a temple). Manasara, a text of South Indian origin, estimated to be in circulation by the 7th century AD, is a guidebook on South Indian temple design and construction. Isanasivagurudeva paddhatiis another Sanskrit text from the 9th century describing the art of temple building in India in south and central India. In north India, Brihat-samhita by Varâhamihira is the widely cited ancient Sanskrit manual from 6th century describing the design and construction of Nagara style of Hindu temples. Elements of a Hindu temple in Kalinga style. There are many Hindu temple styles, but they almost universally share common geometric principles, symbolism of ideas, and expression of core beliefs.

The plan

A Hindu temple design follows a geometrical design called vastu-purusha-mandala. The name is a composite Sanskrit word with three of the most important components of the plan. Mandala means circle, Purusha is universal essence at the core of Hindu tradition, while Vastu means the dwelling structure. Vastupurushamandala is a yantra. The design lays out a Hindu temple in a symmetrical, self-repeating structure derived from central beliefs, myths, cardinality and mathematical principles.

The four cardinal directions help create the axis of a Hindu temple, around which is formed a perfect square in the space available. The circle of mandala circumscribes the square. The square is considered divine for its perfection and as a symbolic product of knowledge and human thought, while circle is considered earthly, human and observed in everyday life (moon, sun, horizon, water drop, rainbow). Each supports the other. The square is divided into perfect 64 (or in some cases 81) sub-squares called padas. Each pada is conceptually

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assigned to a symbolic element, sometimes in the form of a deity. The central square(s) of the 64 or 81 grid is dedicated to the Brahman (not to be confused with Brahmin), and are called Brahma padas.

The 8x8 (64) grid Manduka Hindu Temple Floor Plan, according to Vastupurusamandala. The 64 grid is the most sacred and common Hindu temple template. The bright saffron center, where diagonals intersect above, represents the Purusha of Hindu philosophy.

The 49 grid design is called Sthandila and of great importance in creative expressions of Hindu temples in South India, particularly in "Prakaras". The symmetric Vastu-purusa-mandala grids are sometimes combined to form a temple superstructure with two or more attached squares. The temples face sunrise, and the entrance for the devotee is typically this east side. The mandala pada facing sunrise is dedicated to Surya deity (Sun). The Surya pada is flanked by the padas of Satya (Truth) deity on one side and Indra (king of gods) deity on other. The east and north faces of most temples feature a mix of gods and demi-gods; while west and south feature demons and demi-gods related to the underworld. This vastu purusha mandala plan and symbolism is systematically seen in ancient Hindu temples on Indian subcontinent as well as those in southeast Asia, with regional creativity and variations.

Beneath the mandala's central square(s) is the space for the formless shapeless all pervasive all connecting Universal Spirit, the highest reality, the purusha. This space is sometimes referred to as garbha-griya (literally womb house) - a small, perfect square, windowless, enclosed space without ornamentation that represents universal essence. In or near this space is typically a murti (idol). This is the main deity idol, and this varies with each temple. Often it is this idol that gives the temple a local name, such as Visnu temple, Krishna temple, Rama temple, Narayana temple, Siva temple, Lakshmitemple, Ganesha temple, Durga temple, Hanuman temple, Surya temple, and others. It is this garbha-griya which devotees seek for "darsana" (literally, a sight of knowledge, or vision).

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Above the vastu-purusha-mandala is a superstructure with a dome called Shikhara in north India, and Vimana in south India, that stretches towards the sky. Sometimes, in makeshift temples, the dome may be replaced with symbolic bamboo with few leaves at the top. The vertical dimension's cupola or dome is designed as a pyramid, conical or other mountain-like shape, once again using principle of concentric circles and squares (see below). Scholars suggest that this shape is inspired by cosmic mountain of Meru or Himalayan Kailasa, the abode of gods according to Vedic mythology. A Hindu temple has a Shikhara (Vimana or Spire) that rises symmetrically above the central core of the temple. These spires come in many designs and shapes, but they all have mathematical precision and geometric symbolism. One of the common principles found in Hindu temple spires is circles and turning-squares theme (left), and a concentric layering design (right) that flows from one to the other as it rises towards the sky.

In larger temples, the central space typically is surrounded by an ambulatory for the devotee to walk around and ritually circumambulate the Purusa, the universal essence. Often this space is visually decorated with carvings, paintings or images meant to inspire the devotee. In some temples, these images may be stories from Hindu Epics, in others they may be Vedic tales about right and wrong or virtues and vice, in some they may be idols of minor or regional deities. The pillars, walls and ceilings typically also have highly ornate carvings or images of the four just and necessary pursuits of life - kama, artha, dharma and moksa. This walk around is called pradakshina.

Large temples also have pillared halls called mandapa. One on the east side, serves as the waiting room for pilgrims and devotees. The mandapa may be a separate structure in older temples, but in newer temples this space is integrated into the temple superstructure. Mega temple sites have a main temple surrounded by smaller temples and shrines, but these are still arranged by principles of symmetry, grids and mathematical precision. An important principle found in the layout of Hindu temples is mirroring and repeating fractal-like design structure, each unique yet also repeating the central

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common principle, one which Susan Lewandowski refers to as "an organism of repeating cells".

The ancient texts on Hindu temple design, the Vastupurusamandala and Vastu Sastras, do not limit themselves to the design of a Hindu temple. They describe the temple as a holistic part of its community, and lay out various principles and a diversity of alternate designs for home, village and city layout along with the temple, gardens, water bodies and nature.

Exceptions to the square grid principle

Predominant number of Hindu temples exhibit the perfect square grid principle. However, there are some exceptions. For example, the Teli-ka-mandir in Gwalior, built in the 8th century CE is not a square but is a rectangle in 2:3 proportion. Further, the temple explores a number of structures and shrines in 1:1, 1:2, 1:3, 2:5, 3:5 and 4:5 ratios. These ratios are exact, suggesting the architect intended to use these harmonic ratios, and the rectangle pattern was not a mistake, nor an arbitrary approximation. Other examples of non-square harmonic ratios are found at Naresar temple site of Madhya Pradesh and Nakti-Mata temple near Jaipur, Rajasthan. Michael Meister suggests that these exceptions mean the ancient Sanskrit manuals for temple building were guidelines, and Hinduism permitted its artisans flexibility in expression and aesthetic independence.

The symbolism

A Hindu temple is a symbolic reconstruction of the universe and universal principles that make everything in it function. The temples reflect Hindu philosophy and its diverse views on cosmos and Truths.

Hinduism has no traditional ecclesiastical order, no centralized religious authorities, no governing body, no prophet(s) nor any binding holy book; Hindus can choose to be polytheistic, pantheistic, monistic, or atheistic. Within this diffuse and open structure, spirituality in Hindu philosophy is an individual experience, and referred to as kcaitrajña It defines spiritual practice as one's journey towards moksha,

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awareness of self, the discovery of higher truths, true nature of reality, and a consciousness that is liberated and content. A Hindu temple reflects these core beliefs. The central core of almost all Hindu temples is not a large communal space; the temple is designed for the individual, a couple or a family - a small, private space where he or she experiences darsana.

Darsana is itself a symbolic word. In ancient Hindu scripts, darsana is the name of six methods or alternate viewpoints of understanding Truth. These are Nyaya, Vaisesika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta - each of which flowered into their own schools of Hinduism, each of which are considered valid, alternate paths to understanding Truth and realizing Self in the Hindu way of life.

From names to forms, from images to stories carved into the walls of a temple, symbolism is everywhere in a Hindu temple. Life principles such as the pursuit of joy, sex, connection and emotional pleasure (kama) are fused into mystical, erotic and architectural forms in Hindu temples. These motifs and principles of human life are part of the sacred texts of Hindu, such as its Upanishads; the temples express these same principles in a different form, through art and spaces. For example, Brihadaranyaka Upanisad at 4.3.21, recites:

In the embrace of his beloved a man forgets the whole world, everything both within and without; in the same way, he who embraces the Self, knows neither within nor without.

— Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 7th Century BC

The architecture of Hindu temples is also symbolic. The whole structure fuses the daily life and it surroundings with the divine concepts, through a structure that is open yet raised on a terrace, transitioning from the secular towards the sacred, inviting the visitor inwards towards the Brahma pada and temple's central core, as well as lifting him upwards into a symbolic space marked by its spire (shikhara, vimana). The ancient temples had grand intricately carved entrances but no doors, and lacked a boundary wall. In most cultures, suggests Edmund Leach, a boundary and gateway separates the secular and the sacred, and this gateway door is grand. In Hindu tradition, this is discarded in favor of an open and diffusive architecture, where the secular world was

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not separated from the sacred, but transitioned and flowed into the sacred. The Hindu temple has structural walls, which were patterned usually within the 64 grid, or other geometric layouts. Yet the layout was open on all sides, except for the core space which had just one opening for darsana. The temple space is laid out in a series of courts (mandappas). The outermost regions may incorporate the negative and suffering side of life with symbolism of evil, asuras and rakshashas (demons); but in small temples this layer is dispensed with. When present, this outer region diffuse into the next inner layer that bridges as human space, followed by another inner Devika padas space and symbolic arts incorporating the positive and joyful side of life about the good and the gods. This divine space then concentrically diffuses inwards and lifts the guest to the core of the temple, where resides the main idol as well as the space for the Purusa and ideas held to be most sacred principles in Hindu tradition. The symbolism in the arts and temples of Hinduism, suggests Edmund Leach, is similar to those in Christianity and other major religions of the world.

The teams that built Hindu temples

Ancient Indian texts call the craftsmen and builders of temples as "Silpin", derived from "Silpa". One of earliest mentions of Sanskrit word Silpa is in Atharvaveda, from about 1000 BC, which scholars have translated as any work of art. Other scholars suggest that the word Silpa has no direct one word translation in English, nor does the word "Silpin". Silpa, explains Stella Kramrisch, is a multicolored word and incorporates art, skill, craft, ingenuity, imagination, form, expression and inventiveness of any art or craft. Similarly a Shilpin, notes Kramrisch, is a complex Sanskrit word, describing any person who embodies art, science, culture, skill, rhythm and employs creative principles to produce any divine form of expression. Silpins who built Hindu temples, as well as the art works and sculpture within them, were considered by the ancient Sanskrit texts to deploy arts whose number are unlimited, Kala (techniques) that were 64 in number, and Vidya (science) that were of 32 types.

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The Hindu manuals of temple construction describe the education, characteristics of good artists and architects. The general education of a Hindu Shilpin in ancient India included Lekha or Lipi (alphabet, reading and writing), Rupa (drawing and geometry), Ganana (arithmetic). These were imparted from age 5 to 12. The advanced students would continue in higher stages of Shilpa Sastra studies till the age of 25. Apart from specialist technical competence, the manuals suggest that best Silpins for building a Hindu temple are those who know the essence of Vedas and Agamas, consider themselves as students, keep well verse with principles of traditional sciences and mathematics, painting and geography. Further they are kind, free from jealousy, righteous, have their sense under control, of happy disposition, and ardent in everything they do.

According to Silparatna, a Hindu temple project would start with a Yajamana (patron), and include a Sthapaka (guru, spiritual guide and architect-priest), a Sthapati (architect) who would design the building, a Sutragrahin (surveyor), and many Vardhakins (workers, masons, painters, plasterers, overseers) and Taksakas (sculptors). While the temple is under construction, all those working on the temple were revered and considered sacerdotal by the patron as well as others witnessing the construction. Further, it was a tradition that all tools and materials used in temple building and all creative work had the sanction of a sacrament. For example, if a carpenter or sculptor needed to fell a tree or cut a rock from a hill, he would propitiate the tree or rock with prayers, seeking forgiveness for cutting it from its surroundings, and explaining his intent and purpose. The axe used to cut the tree would be anointed with butter to minimize the hurt to the tree. Even in modern times, in some parts of India such as Odisha, Visvakarma Puja is a ritual festival every year where the craftsmen and artists worship their arts, tools and materials.

The social functions of Hindu Temple

Hindu temples served as nuclei of important social, economic, artistic and intellectual functions in ancient and medieval India. Burton Stein states that South Indian temples managed regional development function, such as irrigation projects, land

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reclamation, post-disaster relief and recovery. These activities were paid for by the donations (melvarum) they collected from devotees. Temples also managed lands endowed to it by its devotees upon their death. They would provide employment to the poorest. Some temples had large treasury, with gold and silver coins, and these temples served as banks.

In contemporary times, the process of building a Hindu temple by emigrants and diasporas from South Asia has also served as a process of building a community, a social venue to network, reduce prejudice and seek civil rights together.

Library of Manuscripts

John Guy and Jorrit Britschgi state Hindu temples served as centers where ancient manuscripts were routinely used for learning and where the texts were copied when they wore out. In South India, temples and associated mutts served custodial functions, and a large number of manuscripts on Hindu philosophy, poetry, grammar and other subjects were written, multiplied and preserved inside the temples. Archaeological and epigraphical evidence indicates existence of libraries called Sarasvati-bhandara, dated possibly to early 12th-century and employing librarians, attached to Hindu temples.

Palm-leaf manuscripts called lontar in dedicated stone libraries have been discovered by archaeologists at Hindu temples in Bali Indonesia and in 10th century Cambodian temples such as Angkor Wat and Banteay Srei.

Temple schools

Inscriptions from 4th century CE suggest the existence of schools around Hindu temples, called Ghatikas or Mathas, where the Vedas were studied. In south India, 9th century Vedic schools attached to Hindu temples were called Calai or Salai, and these provided free boarding and lodging to students and scholars. The temples linked to Bhakti movement in the early 2nd millennium, were dominated by non-Brahmins. These assumed many educational functions, including the exposition, recitation and public discourses of Sanskrit and Vedic texts. Some temple schools offered wide range of studies, ranging

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from Hindu scriptures to Buddhist texts, grammar, philosophy, martial arts, music and painting. By the 8th century, Hindu temples also served as the social venue for tests, debates, team competition and Vedic recitals called Anyonyam.

Styles

Hindu temples are found in diverse locations each incorporating different methods of construction and styles:

- Mountain temples such as Masrur
- Cave temples such as Chandrabhaga, Chalukya and Ellora
- Step well temple compounds such as the Mata Bhavani, Ankol Mata and Huccimallugudi.
- Forest temples such as Kasaun and Kusama
- River bank and sea shore temples such as Somnath.

Step well temples

In arid western parts of India, such as Rajasthan and Gujarat, Hindu communities built large walk in wells that served as the only source of water in dry months but also served as social meeting places and carried religious significance. These monuments went down into earth towards subterranean water, up to seven storey, and were part of a temple complex. These vav (literally, stepwells) had intricate art reliefs on the walls, with numerous idols and images of Hindu deities, water spirits and erotic symbolism. The step wells were named after Hindu deities; for example, Mata Bhavani's Stepwell, Ankol Mata Vav, Sikotari Vav and others. The temple ranged from being small single pada (cell) structure to large nearby complexes. These stepwells and their temple compounds have been variously dated from late 1st millennium BC through 11th century AD. Of these, Rani ki vav, with hundreds of art reliefs including many of Vishnu deity avatars, has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Cave Temples

The Indian rock-cut architecture evolved in Maharashtran temple style in the 1st millennium AD. The temples are carved from a single piece of rock as a complete temple or carved in a cave to look like the interior of a temple. Ellora Temple is an

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example of the former, while The Elephanta Caves are representative of the latter style. The Elephanta Caves consist of two groups of caves—the first is a large group of five Hindu caves and the second is a smaller group of two Buddhist caves. The Hindu caves contain rock-cut stone sculptures, representing the Shaiva Hindu sect, dedicated to the god Shiva.

Arts inside Hindu temples

Illustration of Chitrardha style of art work in a Hindu temple.

A typical, ancient Hindu temple has a profusion of arts - from paintings to sculpture, from symbolic icons to engravings, from thoughtful layout of space to fusion of mathematical principles with Hindu sense of time and cardinality.

Ancient Sanskrit texts classify idols and images in number of ways. For example, one method of classification is the dimensionality of completion:

- chitra - images that are 3-dimensional and completely formed,
- chitrardha - images that are engraved in half relief,
- chitrabhasa - images that are 2-dimensional such as paintings on walls and cloths.

Images and idols inside Hindu temples vary widely in their expression. Raudra or ugra images express destruction, fear and violence, such as Kali image on left. Shanta or saumya images express joy, knowledge and harmony, such as Saraswati image on right. Saumya images are most common in Hindu temples.

Another way of classification is by the expressive state of the image:

- raudra or ugra - are images that were meant to terrify, induce fear. These typically have wide, circular eyes, carry weapons, have skulls and bones as adornment. These idols were worshipped by soldiers before going to war, or by people in times of distress or errors. Raudra deity temples were not set up inside villages or towns, but invariably outside and in remote areas of a kingdom.
- shanta and saumya - are images that were pacific, peaceful and expressive of love, compassion, kindness and other

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virtues in Hindu pantheon. These images would carry symbolic icons of peace, knowledge, music, wealth, flowers, sensuality among other things. In ancient India, these temples were predominant inside villages and towns.

A Hindu temple may or may not include an idol or images, but larger temples usually do. Personal Hindu temples at home or a hermitage may have a pada for yoga or meditation, but be devoid of anthropomorphic representations of god. Nature or others arts may surround him or her. To a Hindu yogin, states Gopinath Rao, one who has realised Self and the Universal Principle within himself, there is no need for any temple or divine image for worship. However, for those who have yet to reach this height of realization, various symbolic manifestations through images, idols and icons as well as mental modes of worship are offered as one of the spiritual paths in the Hindu way of life. This belief is repeated in ancient Hindu scriptures. For example, the Jabaladarshana Upanishad states:

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND DESTRUCTION

A number of ancient Indian texts suggest the prevalence of idols, temples and shrines in Indian subcontinent for thousands of years. For example, the 4th century BC text, Astadhyayi mentions male deity arcas (images/idols) of Agni, Indra, Varuna, Rudra, Mrda, Pusa, Surya, Soma being worshipped, as well as the worship of arcas of female goddesses such as Indrani, Varunani, Usa, Bhavani, Prthivi and Vrsakapayi. The 2nd Century BC "Mahabhasya" of Patanjali extensively describes temples of Dhanapati (deity of wealth and finance, Kubera), as well as temples of Rama and Kesava, wherein the worship included dance, music and extensive rituals. The Mahabhasya also describes the rituals for Krsna, Visnu and Siva. An image recovered from Mathura in north India has been dated to the 2nd century BC. Kautilya's Arthasastra from 3rd Century BC describes a city of temples, each enshrining various Vedic and Puranic deities. All three of these sources have common names, describe common rituals,

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symbolism and significance possibly suggesting that the idea of idols, temples and shrines passed from one generation to next, in ancient India, at least from the 4th century BC. The oldest temples, suggest scholars, were built of brick and wood. Stone became the preferred material of construction later.

Early Jainism and Buddhism literature, along with Kautilya's Arthasastra, describe structures, embellishments and designs of these temples - all with motifs and deities currently prevalent in Hinduism. Bas-reliefs and idols have been found from 2nd to 3rd Century, but none of the temple structures have survived. Scholars theorize that those ancient temples of India, later referred to as Hindu temples, were modeled after domestic structure - a house or a palace. Beyond shrines, nature was revered, in forms such as trees, rivers, stupas before the time of Buddha and Vardhamana Mahavira. As Jainism and Buddhism branched off from the religious tradition later to be called Hinduism, the ideas, designs and plans of ancient Vedic and Upanishad era shrines were adopted and evolved, likely from the competitive development of temples and arts in Jainism and Buddhism. Ancient reliefs found so far, states Michael Meister, suggest five basic shrine designs and combinations thereof in 1st millennium BC:

1. A raised platform with or without a symbol
2. A raised platform under an umbrella
3. A raised platform under a tree
4. A raised platform enclosed with a railing
5. A raised platform inside a pillared pavilion

Many of these ancient shrines were roofless, some had toranas and roof.

From the 1st century BC through 3rd Century AD, the evidence and details about ancient temples increases. The ancient literature refers to these temples as Pasada (or Prasada), stana, mahasthana, devalaya, devagrha, devakula, devakulika, ayatana and harmya. The entrance of the temple is referred to as dvarakosthaka in these ancient texts notes Meister, the temple hall is described as sabha or ayagasabha, pillars were called kumbhaka, while vedika referred to the structures at the boundary of a temple.

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With the start of Gupta dynasty in the 4th century, Hindu temples flourished in innovation, design, scope, form, use of stone and new materials as well as symbolic synthesis of culture and dharmic principles with artistic expression. It is this period that is credited with the ideas of garbhagrha for Purusa, mandapa for sheltering the devotees and rituals in progress, as well as symbolic motifs relating to dharma, karma, kama, artha and moksha. Temple superstructures were built from stone, brick and wide range of materials. Entrance ways, walls and pillars were intricately carved, while parts of temple were decorated with gold, silver and jewels. Visnu, Siva and other deities were placed in Hindu temples, while Buddhists and Jains built their own temples, often side by side with Hindus.

The 4th through 6th century marked the flowering of Vidharbha style, whose accomplishments survive in central India as Ajanta caves, Pavnar, Mandhal and Mahesvar. In South India, this period is credited with some of the earliest stone temples of the region, with Chalukya temples dated to be from the 5th century by some scholars, and the 6th by some others. Over 6th and 7th century, temple designs were further refined during Maurya dynasty, evidence of which survives today at Ellora and Elephanta.

It is the 5th through 7th century AD when outer design and appearances of Hindu temples in north India and south India began to widely diverge. Nevertheless, the forms, theme, symbolism and central ideas in the grid design remained same, before and after, pan-India as innovations were adopted to give distinctly different visual expressions.

During the 5th to 11th century, Hindu temples flourished outside Indian subcontinent, such as in Cambodia, Viet Nam, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Destruction and conversion

With the arrival of Islam in South Asia, Hindu temples along with the temples of Buddhists and Jains, became targets of Islamic armies. Idols were broken up and damaged. Spires and pillars were torn down by the invading armies from Persia, Central Asia and resident Sultans. Temples were looted of their treasury

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and parts reused to build or to convert the temples into mosques. During some periods, Muslim emperors such as Akbar encouraged arts, helped repair and protect Hindu temples. In other periods, the Sultans and emperors led a campaign of temple destruction as well as forbade repairs to damaged temples. Richard Eaton has listed 80 campaigns of Hindu temple site destruction stretching over centuries, particularly from the 12th through the 18th century. The religious conflict and desecrations continued during the British colonial era.

The destruction of Hindu temple sites was comparatively less in the southern parts of India, such as in Tamil Nadu. Cave style Hindu temples that were carved inside a rock, hidden and rediscovered centuries later, such as the Kailasha Temple, have also survived. These are now UNESCO world heritage sites.

Customs and etiquette

The customs and etiquette varies across India. Devotees in major temples may bring in symbolic offerings for the puja. This includes fruits, flowers, sweets and other symbols of the bounty of the natural world. Temples in India are usually surrounded with small shops selling these offerings.

When inside the temple, devotees keep both hands folded (namaste mudra). The inner sanctuary, where the murtis reside, is known as the garbhagriha. It symbolizes the birthplace of the universe, the meeting place of the gods and mankind, and the threshold between the transcendental and the phenomenal worlds. It is in this inner shrine that devotees seek a darsana of, where they offer prayers. Devotees may or may not be able to personally present their offerings at the feet of the deity. In most large Indian temples, only the pujaris (priest) are allowed to enter into the main sanctum.

Temple management staff typically announce the hours of operation, including timings for special pujas. These timings and nature of special puja vary from temple to temple. Additionally, there may be specially allotted times for devotees to perform circumambulations (or pradakshina) around the temple.

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Visitors and worshipers to large Hindu temples may be required to deposit their shoes and other footwear before entering. Where this is expected, the temples provide an area and help staff to store footwear. Dress codes vary. It is customary in temples in Kerala, for men to remove shirts and to cover pants and shorts with a traditional cloth known as a Vasthiram. In Java and Bali (Indonesia), before one enters the most sacred parts of a Hindu temple, shirts are required as well as Sarong around one's waist. At many other locations, this formality is unnecessary.

Regional variations in Hindu temples

North Indian temples

North Indian temples are referred to as Nagara style of temple architecture. They have sanctum sanctorum where the deity is present, open on one side from where the devotee obtains darœana. There may or may not be many more surrounding corridors, halls, etc. However, there will be space for devotees to go around the temple in clockwise fashion circumambulation. In North Indian temples, the tallest towers are built over the sanctum sanctorum in which the deity is installed.

The north India Nagara style of temple designs often deploy fractal-theme, where smaller parts of the temple are themselves images or geometric re-arrangement of the large temple, a concept found in French and Russian architecture such as the matryoshka principle. One difference is the scope and cardinality, where Hindu temple structures deploy this principle in every dimension with garbhgriya as the primary locus, and each pada as well as zones serving as additional centers of loci. This makes a Nagara Hindu temple architecture symbolically a perennial expression of movement and time, of centrifugal growth fused with the idea of unity in everything.

Temples in West Bengal

In West Bengal, the Bengali terra cotta temple architecture is found. Due to lack of suitable stone in the alluvial soil locally available, the temple makers had to resort to other materials instead of stone. This gave rise to using terracotta as a medium

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for temple construction. Terracotta exteriors with rich carvings are a unique feature of Bengali temples. The town of Vishnupur in West Bengal is renowned for this type of architecture. There is also a popular style of building known as Navaratna (nine-towered) or Pancharatna (five-towered). An example of Navaratna style is the Dakshineswar Kali Temple.

TEMPLES IN ODISHA

Odisha temple architecture is known as Kalinga architecture, classifies the spire into three parts, the Bâ
a (lower limb), the Gan
i (body) and theCu7a/Mastaka (head). Each part is decorated in a different manner. Kalinga architecture is a style which flourished in Kalinga, the name for kingdom that included ancient Odisha. It includes three styles: Rekha Deula, Pidha Deula and Khakhara Deula. The former two are associated with Vishnu, Surya and Shiva temples while the third is mainly associated with Chamunda and Durga temples. The Rekha Deula and Khakhara Deula houses the sanctum sanctorum while the Pidha Deula style includes space for outer dancing and offering halls.

Temples of Goa and other Konkani temples

The temple architecture of Goa is quite unique. As Portuguese colonial hegemony increased, Goan Hindu temples became the rallying point to local resistance. Many these temples are not more than 500 years old, and are a unique blend of original Goan temple architecture, Dravidian, Nagar and Hemadpanthi temple styles with some British and Portuguese architectural influences. Goan temples were built using sedimentary rocks, wood, limestone and clay tiles, and copper sheets were used for the roofs. These temples were decorated with mural art called as Kavi kala or ocher art. The interiors have murals and wood carvings depicting scenes from the Hindu mythology.

South Indian and Sri lankan temples

South Indian temples have a large gopuram, a monumental tower, usually ornate, at the entrance of the temple. This forms

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a prominent feature of Koils, Hindu temples of the Dravidian style. They are topped by thekalasam, a bulbous stone finial. They function as gateways through the walls that surround the temple complex. The gopuram's origins can be traced back to early structures of the Tamil kings Pallavas; and by the twelfth century, under the Pandya rulers, these gateways became a dominant feature of a temple's outer appearance, eventually overshadowing the inner sanctuary which became obscured from view by the gopuram's colossal size. It also dominated the inner sanctum in amount of ornamentation. Often a shrine has more than one gopuram. They also appear in architecture outside India, especially Khmer architecture, as at Angkor Wat. A koil may have multiple gopurams, typically constructed into multiple walls in tiers around the main shrine. The temple's walls are typically square with the outer most wall having gopuras. The sanctum sanctorium and its towering roof (the central deity's shrine) are also called the vimanam. The inner sanctum has restricted access with only priests allowed beyond a certain point.

Temples in Kerala

Temples in Kerala have a different architectorial style,(keeping the same essence of vaastu) especially due to climatic differences Kerala have with other parts of India with larger rainfall. The temple roof is mostly tiled and is sloped and the walls are often square, the inner most shrine being entirely enclosed in another four walls to which only the pujari(priest) enters.

The walls are decorated with either mural paintings or rock sculptures which many a times are emphasised on Dwarapalakas.

Temples in Tamil Nadu

Temple construction reached its peak during rule of Pallavas. They built various temples around Kancheepuram, and Narasimhavarman II built the Shore Temple in Mamallapuram, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Pandyas rule created temples such as the Meenakshi Amman Temple at Madurai and Nellaiappar Temple at Tirunelveli. The Cholas

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were prolific temple builders right from the times of the first medieval king Vijayalaya Chola. The Chola temples include Nataraja temple at Chidambaram, the Sri Ranganathaswami Temple at Srirangam, the Brihadeshvara Temple of Thanjavur, Brihadeshvara Temple of Gangaikonda Cholapuram and the Airavatesvara Temple of Darasuram which are among the UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The Nayaks of Madurai reconstructed some of the well-known temples in Tamil Nadu such as the Meenakshi Temple.

Temples in Cambodia

Angkor Wat was built as a Hindu temple by King Suryavarman II in the early 12th century in Y asodharapura (Khmer, present-day Angkor), the capital of the Khmer Empire, as his state temple and eventual mausoleum. Breaking from the Shaiva tradition of previous kings, Angkor Wat was instead dedicated to Vishnu. The Spire in Khmer Hindu temple is called Giri (mountain) and symbolizes the residence of gods just like Meru does in Bali Hindu mythology and Ku (Guha) does in Burmese Hindu mythology.

Angkor Wat is just one of numerous Hindu temples in Cambodia, most of them in ruins. Hundreds of Hindu temples are scattered from Siem Reap to Sambor Prei Kuk in central Cambodian region.

Temples in Vietnam

There are a number of Hindu temple clusters along the coast of Vietnam, with some on UNESCO world heritage site list. Examples include Mù Sõn - a cluster of 70 temples with earliest dated to be from the 4th century AD and dedicated to Siva, while others are dedicated to Hindu deities Krishna, Vishnu and others. These temples, internally and with respect to each other, are also built on the Hindu perfect square grid concept. Other sites in Vietnam with Hindu temples include Phan Rang with the Cham temple Po Klong Garai.

Temples in Indonesia

Ancient temples in Indonesia are called candi. Hindu temples of ancient Java, Indonesia, bear resemblances with

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temples of South Indian style. The largest of these is the 9th century Javanese Hindu temple, Prambanan in Yogyakarta, now a UNESCO world heritage site. It was designed as three concentric squares and has 224 temples. The inner square contains 16 temples dedicated to major Hindu deities, of which Siva temple is the largest. The temple has extensive wall reliefs and carvings illustrating the stories from the Hindu epic Ramayana.

In Bali, Pura (Balinese temple) is designed as an open-air worship place in a walled compound. The compound walls have a series of intricately decorated gates without doors for the devotee to enter. The design, plan and layout of the holy pura follows a square layout.

Temples outside Asia

Many members of the South Asian diaspora have established Hindu mandirs outside India as a means of preserving and celebrating cultural and spiritual heritage abroad. Describing the hundreds of mandirs that can be found throughout the United States, scholar Gail M. Harley observes, "The temples serve as central locations where Hindus can come together to worship during holy festivals and socialize with other Hindus. Temples in America reflect the colorful kaleidoscopic aspects contained in Hinduism while unifying people who are disbursed throughout the American landscape." Numerous mandirs in North America and Europe have gained particular prominence and acclaim.

Temple Management

The Archaeological Survey of India has control of most ancient temples of archaeological importance in India. In India, day-to-day activities of a temple is managed by a temple board committee that administers its finances, management, and events. Since independence, the autonomy of individual Hindu religious denominations to manage their own affairs with respect to temples of their own denomination has been severely eroded and the state governments have taken control of major Hindu temples.

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2

Temple Architecture

The Mauryas were famous for their art and architecture Evidence of the earliest known structural temples has been recovered through excavations. A circular brick and timber shrine of the Mauryan period of 3rd century B.C., was excavated at Bairat District of Jaipur, Rajasthan. The shrine measures 23 meters in diameter and was made of lime-plastered brick work, alternating with 26 octagonal pillars, of wood. It was entered from the east through a small portico, supported by two wooden pillars and was surrounded by a seven feet wide ambulatory. A second example of a Maurya temple uncovered by excavations, Temple 40' at Sanchi, has a similar plan, it was a stone temple on an apsidal plan enclosed by an ambulatory, and raised on a high, rectangular scale, approached by two flights of steps from diagonally opposite sides. The super-structure was possibly built of wood, and has disappeared. In the following centuries the temple underwent a series of changes making it difficult to recognise from the original plan. Temple 18 at Sanchi also was an apsidal stone temple probably with a timber superstructure, originally dating from the 2nd century B.C. The present remains of the apsidal temple with its stately pillars and pilaster dates from about the 7th century A.D. though the temple remained in use till the medieval period. Perhaps the earliest structural temple still standing in its original condition is the one constructed at Aihole in Karnataka. This is a little structure

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built of huge almost boulder-like blocks of stones. The temple consists of a simple square cell the garbhagriha or sanctum sanctorum, in front of which there is a covered verandah, a portico, which consists of four heavy pillars supporting a stone roof. The pillars as well as the entire structure is as simple as can be, except for a small frieze-like motif on the small parapet that runs on two sides of the ground length of the portico.

It is interesting to observe that the architect who built this edifice had not yet discovered that the two pillars nearest the cell need not have been built standing clear away from the wall but that they could easily have been pilasters, half pillars, half jutting out of the back wall of the verandah. Nor had he taken the climate into consideration and did not provide gargoyles to allow the rain water to run off the roof. The entire structure is heavy, bulky and clumsy. Probably, this was constructed near about 300 to 350 A.D.

Temple No. 17, at Sanchi is a small temple built about 400 A.D. and everything attempted earlier, is done much better here. The stones are smaller and laid out in regular neat rows; the roof has been separated so that the portico has a slightly less prominent height - the Sanctum-Sanctorum being the main house of the God. Gargoyles have been thoughtfully provided to drain off rain water and the four back pillars are more slender and beautifully carved. This temple truly belongs to the Classical Period and is marked by elegance, harmony, balance and dignity. Decoration is minimal and is only used where one structural form joins another. An inverted lotus is placed where the top of the shaft joins. The capital and little lions, seated back to back, act as support where the roof rests on top of the pillar. The entire structure is simple, with no complication. However, in the course of time the extremely plain and simple temple architecture becomes increasingly complicated, from a simple quadrangle it evolves into salient and re-entering angles, protrusions are added, making the outline more and more involved, till eventually it becomes almost like a star with more than a hundred little corners on the ground level. Lad Khan Temple, Aihole, Karnataka The Ladkhan temple of Aihole belongs to about 5th century A.D. Here the architect has tried

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to give attention to the circumambulation path which is enclosed by means of a wall allowing devotees to havepradakshana or cirumambulatory of the holy of holies. Obviously when a large number of people would be going round in a dark gallery the consideration of light and ventilation would naturally arise and for that purpose the architect has provided perforated jallies. The entrance portico is in this particular case kept relatively small and not too much stress is laid on it. After all, it is only the entrance gateway. The structure still reminds us of a wooden prototype with stone walls, supporting a slanting roof made of large boulders of stone slabs. Cleverly enough the roof has been given a slant and provided with gargoyles to allow rain water to run off and on the sanctum sanctorum proper the roof is a little higher, and very rightly so, for that is the, abode of the God. On the top of the structure is the very first attempt to raise a turret, a precursor to the future loftier spire, the Shikhara. The idea behind it must have been that, a temple being the home of the God must be seen from far and near, from different parts of the village or town so it must be tall and higher than the surrounding buildings.

The Durga temple at Aihole is an apsidal temple of about 550 A.D. in which the architect has made immense improvements upon his previous attempts. This temple is provided with a high pedestal, an open pillared verandah serving as pradakshana patha, in place of a dark, ambulatory passage as in the case of the Ladkhan temple. Instead of perforated jallies is a pillared verandah running round the shrine, open, well ventilated and well lit. There is a high entrance with steps leading up to a tall base; the roof is almost double in height and in this particular case the turret is beginning to take the shape of a little spire, which, during the course of the next centuries; evolved into a towering Shikhara. The pillars would have looked very dull had they not provided an opportunity to the sculptors to carve with beautiful figures. Carving is also done under the row of pillars and for the first time we come across brackets supporting the beam of the roof across the wide opening of the temple. This again reminds us of the practice followed by the architect working in wood, who wanted to make either a house or a

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shrine by putting up pillars or posts of bamboo or wood on top of which he put horizontal beams so as to hold the roof. To make this construction doubly strong, he hit upon the 'idea of making brackets, an essential element in Hindu and Buddhist architecture in India and used much earlier in China; a slanting piece of stone emerging as it were from the pillars or posts, reaching out like an arm to hold the lintel or beam steadily. This kind of construction is known by the architectural term, trabeate, as distinct from accurate which was later made use of by the Muslims. Apart from structural temples the other variety of temples are rock cut, found at Mahabalipuram, about 38 miles down south of Madras on the sea shore, datable to the 5th century A.D. In local parlance they are known as Ratha or chariots and are named after the five Pandava brothers and Draupadi but they neither have anything to do with chariots nor probably with the Pandavas and these associations are purely of a local character. The great Pallava rulers of Kanchipuram, were great builders and the Pallava craftsmen, seized upon the long outcrop or rocks and boulders available on the sea shore, carved them and gave to them the shape of temples (monolithic) as well as colossal statues of lions, elephants and bulls, etc. carved out of smaller boulders. One of these rock cut temples is known as the Draupadi Ratha. It is a rock -cut imitation of a mud hut, supported by wooden posts, crowned by an imitation of a thatched roof. The Draupadi Ratha consists of a square cell, with not even a portico, surmounted by a. hanging roof suggestive in its shape of a Bengali hut. There is every reason to believe that this, like so many other forms of structural Indian architecture is an imitation of a prototype construction of bamboo and thatch. Two lovely girls adorn the entrance, each carved in a small niche provided for the purpose on either side of the entrance. A floral decoration runs along the edge of the roof which, according to some, is nothing but a rock cut representation of the original brass or copper edging over the thatching to keep it in position.

In shape and appearance the rest of the rathas seems to have evolved out of a building composed of cells arranged round a square courtyard. As the community of monks

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occupying the monastery increased another storey was added, and then another and still another, the whole structure eventually being topped with a domical roof. These are square in plan and are surmounted by a pyramidal tower such as Arjuna's ratha and the Dharmaraja ratha.There is another type of the Ratha which has a longitudinal and barrel vaulted roof, i.e., they have a roof of the so called elephant-back type (Gajapristhakara). The Durga temple at Aihole, and the Vaital deul at Bhubaneswar are examples. The roof, in the case of the square shrines consists of a simple multiplication of hut roofs, very much the way we can see them in Buddhist monuments and other little huts. Though these are carved in rock they show a so-called Buddhist chaitya window with a little Buddha head. In the case of Arjuna's ratha and Dharmaraja ratha, their wonderful proportions, magnificent disposition of mass of light and shade reveal their classic character. The simple upright posts imitations, of wooden pillars support brackets and the pilasters have small animal bases. Whereas earlier at Sanchi the animals were used for the capital, here they are used as a base.

A temple, named after the twin heroes, Nakula and Sahadeva, is an apsidal one, with ornamental features as in the Dharmaraja, Arjuna and other rathas. There is a slight forward extension of the roof to form a porch supported by two lion pillars. There are no figure-carvings on this temple. Close to this is a monolithic elephant suggesting the Gajapristhakara (elephant back) shape of the apsidal temple. The Ganesh-rath is one of the finest monolithic temples at Mahabalipuram. Though three-storeyed and of better workmanship, it resembles the Bhima-ratha in roof form. The gable-ends of the wagon-roof have a finial showing a human head decorated by a trident shaped head-gear, the slide prongs suggesting the usual horns in the dvarpala-figures and the central one long and narrow crown. This motif is repeated in the finials of the decorative gables along the wagon-roof. There is, as usual, the pavilion and Kudu ornamentation. The elaborately worked roof has nine vase-shaped finials and is the precursor of the later gopuram. A row of pilasters decorates the sides and the back, while the main opening is to the west. Between the dvarapalas at either

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end are two lion pillars in the centre and two pilasters. Shore Temple, Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu

The Shore temple at Mahabalipuram datable to late 7th century is specially known because of its location on the sea-shore. This temple though very similar stylistically to the Dharmaraja ratha, differs from it in an important respect that it is a structural temple and not a rock-cut one. It is about 3 to 4 times the size of the Dharmaraja ratha and is made a triple structure by adding a shrine at the back and slightly jutting out in the front. There are two spires, much loftier than in the case of the previous temples, the higher spire has more storeys than the Dharmaraja ratha and the pinnacle is higher and pointed. It is much more complicated, enlarged and enriched. The shrine is enclosed by a massive wall, having the typical Pallava rampart lion pilasters at regular intervals. On its outer side, the wall is surmounted by seated bull figures. The Kailasanath temple at Kanchipuram was built by Raja Simha shortly after the Shore temple in the 8th century A.D., and compared to the latter, is larger in dimensions and more majestic in appearance. The Kailashnath temple is situated in a rectangular courtyard surrounded by a peristyle composed of a continuous series of cells resembling rathas. But there the Pallava style is further evolved and more elaborate. It consists of the sanctum (garbha griha), a pillared hall (mandapa), the ambulatory, the vestibule in the shape of a hall. The flat roofed pillared mandapa, which was a separate building originally, was connected with the sanctum by a vestibule.

An interesting feature of this temple is that on the three sides of the garbha griha, there are nine shrines. The pyramidal tower, having graceful contours, is a storeyed elevation, each having heavy cornices and stupikas. The shikhara is well-proportioned, substantial, yet at the same time rhythmic in its mass and elegant in its outlines.

The Dhamekh stupa at Sarnath is an imposing cylindrical structure (ht. 43.5 m., dia at base 28.3 m.) of the Gupta age, partly built of stone and partly of brick. Its stone basement has eight projecting faces with large niches for statuary and is further adorned with delicately-carved floral and geometrical patterns.

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Making the holy spot of the enlightenment of the Master, this site is looked upon with, greatest sanctity and became a flourishing Buddhist establishment with numerous temples, stupas and monasteries. According to tradition a large number of shrines and memorials were created at the site to commemorate the incidents before and after enlightenment. The main brick built shrine known as the Mahabodhi temple which appears to have been originally erected in circa 2nd century A.D. is encumbered with heavy renovation, the four corner-towers being an arbitrary addition of circa 14th century A.D. Its central tower, standing on a high plinth, is about 55m. high and is a straight-edged pyramid of seven storeys, by pilasters and chaitya niches.Mahabodhi Temple, Bodh Gaya, Bihar. According to literary tradition, Nalanda, 10 kilometres north of Rajgir and a suburb of the ancient city, was visited by Buddha and Mahavira. Ashoka is said to have worshipped at the chaitya-niches of Sariputra, Buddha's disciple, and erected a temple. By the time of Harsha A.D. 606-648, Nalanda had become the principal centre of Mahayana learning and a famed University town with numerous shrines and monasteries which attracted scholars from far and near. The Chinese Pilgrims Huien Tsang and Fa-hien studied at Nalanda and have left account of the settlement and its life. Temple 3 was more than 31 m. high and consisted of seven successive accumulations of which the two latest belonged to the 11th and 12th centuries and the fifth one, dating from circa 6th century, was notable for its sculptural wealth. The monasteries were imposing rectangular buildings, each with an open courtyard, enclosed by a covered verandah which leads into cells, arranged on the four sides. The cell facing the entrance served as a shrine. Nalanda was an important centre of Pala sculptures and bronzes and has also yielded seals and sealings of great historical significance.

Let us now turn to a region where the north Indian style of temple architecture developed in an interesting direction.

Till about the 6th century A.D., the style of temple architecture was similar both in the north as well as in the south. It is only after this date that each began to evolve in its own different direction. For the present let it be understood clearly

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that the two areas where temple architecture developed most markedly were the Deccan and Orissa and in both these areas the northern and southern style temples can be found side by side. The Vimana, the temple tower over the main shrine in Orissa is one of the most glorious inventions of architecture in India and is functionally a much finer conception than the south Indian Gopuram, where the barrel-shaped tower does not crown the sanctum sanctorum or thegarbha-griha but is a glorified entrance gate. We had suggested in our introduction that the architect wanted to impart to the temple more importance, prominence than the other buildings in the neighbourhood, because here lived his God in the garbha griha or the womb-house. The Orissan spire does precisely this, proclaiming the presence of God far and wide, from its lofty and imposing structure as at the Jagannath temple at Puri or the Lingaraja at Bhubaneswar; driving awe and respect into the hearts of the faithful and impressing all who approach it. The temple tower or the vimana, as it is called in Orissa, is thus, a mighty expression of the religious faith of people. It is interesting to study the temple projected here which is the Vaitala Deul at Bhubaneswar, a barrel- roofed shrine of the Sakti cult, datable to the 8th century A.D. The facade or outer side of the temple is divided by ribbon like elements that run down the base from under the barrel roof. These ribbons project slightly and contain niches with sculptures, while the actual barrel shaped roof is resting on a number of regularly diminishing highly decorated mouldings, one on top of the other. The barrel roof itself is an imitation in stone of a thatched roof of an ancient hut, going back to very early times and still found over bullock carts in Bengal and other regions of the east.

It is interesting here to remember that there is a definite pattern in the elaboration, complication and ornamental decoration evolving out of the dignified simplicity and harmony of the classic period such as seen in the Sanchi temple, gradually giving place to every increasing ornamentation and decoration. We have already seen that in India the sculptor and the architect were often one and the same person and it would be highly misleading to treat sculpture and architecture separately. As a

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matter of fact, sculpture was introduced as a decorative element over the facade on outer walls of a temple. To recapitulate let us look back at the great Sanchi temple of about the 5th century and .see how very simple the structure is and how bare and undecorated the walls are. Then you might have observed that on the walls of the Ladkhan temple, by providing a variety of perforated screen windows, some variation was introduced by about the middle of the 5th century and about a 100 years later in the Durga temple at Aihole, sculpture were added at the base of the pillar round theverandah and gradually in the Vaitala Deul, datable to about the beginning of the 7th century, the sculptor has made rich use of the niches in the ribbon like projections to embellish and decorate the temple. By about the year 1000 A.D. the temple was treated with decorative elements. The Raja Rani temple of Bhubaneswar, is superbly decorated, showing sensuous and graceful figures of Yakshis and Vrikshikas standing amidst luxurious natural surroundings.

The early Indian temple was provided with a flat roof and there was a problem of letting out accumulated rain water. In the Aihole temples of Ladkhan and Durga, the roof slabs have been given a slant and these slabs of large stones which were used in the early Orissan temples datable to about the mid 7th century, namely the Parasurameshvara temple at Bhubaneswar. In this case there are two roofs of slanting slabs, one above the other, providing in between, small skylights allowing light to penetrate inside the shrine. Gradually these slanting slab-roofs begin to increase from one to two and from two to three and gradually by multiplying these roofs, a pyramidal roof results over the shrine, called Jagamohana in Orissa, which precedes the main shrine. A masterpiece of Indian architecture is the Rajarani temple of Bhubaneswar, a work of exquisite grace in which the masses of the Jagamohana and the Vimana are admirably combined to express perfection. There is a very lovely beehive shaped tower rising from the ground with a gentle curvature over the sanctum sanctorum. Shikhara on Shikhara, miniature temple towers, one on top of the other, mount higher and higher to ever loftier heights like the great Mount Everest surrounded by smaller crags. It is

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possible that the architect conceived the idea of the ever rising succession of these miniature Shikharas and was inspired by the great mountain range and the highest peak in the Himalayas which is surrounded by lesser peaks and might well symbolise the aspirations of the human soul to reach up till it merges and mixes with the Eternal and the Almighty Spirit. The Orissan temple stands as a great monument to the infinite patience and loving care and perseverance that moves these architects and the kings who carved ornaments and distinct from the severely simple pyramidal roof of modest height over Jagamohana or themandapa. The multiplication of the slanting slabs has been carried to 13 horizontal elements, diminishing as they reach towards the pinnacle on the top of the pyramid. But even this pinnacle is dwarfed by the importance of the lovely round stone, the amlaka, the chhatra or the crown on top of the spire or tower. The Jagamohana and theVimana are connected by means of miniature spires emerging from the pyramidal roof of the Jagmohana towards the Shikhara of the sanctum sanctorum, making a transition a kind of step that leads the eye towards the height of the tower.

We have seen that the evolution of temple architecture in Orissa is towards the greater elaboration of the plan and pronounced ornamentation over the outside of the walls, with decorative elements, including human figures, gods and goddesses, flora and fauna. Early temples of modest size and somewhat smaller shikharas such as the Parasurameswara temple at Bhubaneswar datable to the middle of the 7th century, with a squat and heavy shikhara over the sanctum sanctorum and a low flat roofed mandapa, embellished with a relief of dancers and musicians of great charm, gradually matures into an elaborate structure of towering height, embellished with sculptural decorations. Then comes the Vaitala Deul which is known for its sculpture grace and exuberance of decoration, with a rectangular sanctum with wagon-vault roof similar to that of the Parasurameswara temple, and is datable on the basis of its decorative motifs and designs, which are mature, expressive and dynamic, to the close of the 8th century.Then comes the Mukateswara

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temple regarded as a gem of Orissan architecture. The Brahmesvara temple is a panchyatana temple securely dated by an inscription, to about 1060 A.D. This is a temple in which the central shrine is surrounded by four small shrines in the four corners of the compound. Though a very beautiful shrine, the spire or shikhara appears to be curving rather abruptly under the amlaka, unlike the spire of the Rajarani which is perfect and admirable for its style and decoration. The Jagamohana has a rather top heavy pyramidal roof, unlike the Rajarani which is of modest height and much simpler.

The Lingaraja temple, datable to about 1000 A.D., is perhaps the most marvellous temple ever erected in this century, the grandest and the loftiest (above 36.50 m. high) marking the culmination of the architectural activities at Bhubaneswar. This temple consists of the sanctum sanctorum, a closed hall, a dancing hall and a hall of offerings, the last two being later additions. The Lingaraja is surrounded by a large number of additional shrines which clutters up the entire compound. The enormous height of the spire, 5 times the height of the Rajarani, dominates the entire surroundings by its soaring loftiness and volume, emphasised by the deeply incised vertical lines of the rathas, a pair of which flanking the central ratha, carry four diminishing replicas of the spire itself as a decorative pattern. The Jagamohana and the spire match each other splendidly and both express the greatness of the Lord. The nine lower roof and seven upper roofs of the Jagamohana are exquisitely adorned with friezes representing a procession of infantry, cavalry, elephants and miscellaneous other scenes that break the monotony of the rising pyramid and a great shikhara surface too is elegantly varied by the introduction of corner miniatureshikharas and flying lions. The elegant and lovely female figures, loving couples in embrace, and other gods and goddesses decorating the surface are all carved with sensuous charm, beauty and delight in fine form. The mature planning of the whole structure, the proportionate distribution of its part, the graceful curve of its shikhara and its elegant architectural and plastic decoration, together with its impressive dimensions make the Lingaraja,

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at Bhubaneswar, one of the greatest creations of Indian architecture. Technically speaking it is a marvellous architectural feat to build a tower and a shrine of such enormous size, of the fashioned stone. It may be mentioned at this juncture, that in the later temples of Orissa, including the Lingaraja, there are two additional shrines attached along one axis - in front of the Jagamohana, a natamandapa, or a hall of dance and music, and a bhogmandapa, a hall of offerings. As a matter of fact, the temple was a total work of art in which we have not only sculptures and painting, but music, dancing and theatrical performance, making it a true civic centre for artistic and cultural activities, somewhat like the modern community halls, which are places for social and cultural gatherings. In the olden days the temple performed this task and was truly the hub around which all civic and religious life of the community revolved.

Among the later shrines of Bhubaneswar the Ananta Vasudeva temple, founded in 1278, is remarkable in more ways then one. It is the only temple dedicated to Vaishnava worship at this predominantly Shiva site and stands on an ornate platform terrace. It continues with the developed plan and decorative scheme of Lingaraja, but the grouping of the roofs over the four compartments in a gradual ascent is more spectacular here. Further, the walls of the sanctum and the Jagamohana display images of the Regents as well as those of their consorts. The last great temple, the grandest achievement of the artistic and architectural genius of Orissa is the Sun temple at Konark which was constructed by the eastern Ganga ruler Narasimha Varmana, about 1250 A.D. It is a vast and wonderful structure, magnificently conceived as a gigantic chariot with 12 pairs of ornamental wheels, pulled by seven rearing horses. The colossal temple originally consisted of a sanctum sanctorum, with a lofty curvilinear shikhara, a Jagamohana and a dancing hall, built on the same axis, and an extensive compound wall with three entrance gateways. The sanctum sanctorum and the dancing hall have lost their roofs and it is only the Jagamohana which has remained intact with its roof. The sanctum sanctorum and the Jagamohana together

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stand on a lofty platform, richly ornamented by friezes of elephants, decorative ornaments interspersed with figures sculptures, often of a highly sensuous character. Over the stupendous roof of the Jagamohana consisting of horizontal tiers, grouped in three stages, stand life size female sculptures of great charm, dancers, cymbal players and others adorning each stage. The whole structure of the Jagamohana unparalleled for its grandeur and structural propriety, is surmounted by an effective contrast of light and shade.

Udaipur, about 40 miles from Bhilsa in Madhya Pradesh, is yet another ancient and remarkable site. The finest and best preserved temple is the Nilakantha or Udayesvara at Udaipur, built by Udayaditya Paramara between 1059 and 1080. It has a covered porch, a pyramidal roof and a tower or Shikhara ornamented by four narrow flat bands running from base to summit, the intervening spaces being occupied with repeated ornaments consisting of reduplication in miniature of the main tower. The whole is carved with particular precision and delicacy, and both tower and mandapa are in perfect preservation, the former surmounted by an amalasila or a vase. The most important of the temples at Pattadakal date from the first half of the 8th century and show the strongest possible evidences of Pallava influence. The great Virupaksha temple, dedicated to Siva as Lokesavara, by the queen of Vikramaditya II datable to 740 A.D., was most likely built by workmen brought from Kanchipuram, and in direct imitation of the Kailasanath at Kanchipuram.The main shrine is distinct from the Mandapam, but has a pradakshana passage, the pillared mandapamhas solid walls, with pierced stone windows. The square shikhara consists of clearly defined storeys each of considerable elevation. Chaitya window motifs are much used and there are many sculptured lintels, slabs and monolithic pillars. It is built of very large, closely-jointed blocks of stone without mortar, in keeping with early Dravidian temple building practices. One of the noblest structures in India, this is the only ancient temple at Pattadakal still in use.

Let us turn our attention once again towards the South of India, where the Dravidian style of temple architecture

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flourished roughly from the 8th century to about the 13-14 century A.D. Unlike the North, the South is literally dotted with thousands of temples, having been relatively free from repeated foreign invasions to which the North was subject. Behind the architectural achievements of the country, lay the urge of the Hindu mind to give vent to its religious and spiritual hopes and aspirations, and the construction and maintenance of a temple became an act of merit or Dharma both here and in the hereafter for all - Kings, nobles and laymen alike. It was the centre of all cultural and social life, the hub around which all activities revolved. Its influence extended beyond the purely religious and spiritual realms and made the temple an important centre. The temple was a leading landowner, thanks to the frequent donations from kings, nobles and lay-devotees. The construction of a temple usually took many years and it gave employment to hundreds of artists and engineers. The finest craftsmen from neighbouring provinces found employment and a whole generation of talented sculptors were trained by them during its construction. The daily routine gave assured employment to a large number of people, priests, musicians, dancing girls, teachers, florist, tailors, etc. In course of time the simple unostentatious temple became a vast conglomeration of structures, consisting of subsidiary shrines, Natamandaps and Bhogamandapas, or a dance hall and hall of offerings. Poet pavillions, confectioners and others were allowed to become part of temple complex. In other words the temple almost embraced and enveloped the town or the town embraced and enveloped the temple. With the increase in all these additional structures, more compounds were added to the original temple compound, one inside the other, like Chinese boxes.

The present South Indian temple, therefore, consists of walls, quadrangles, one within the other. The inner most wall in the area contains the temple proper, a much smaller and unpretentious structure than the other larger gateways which now began to attract the attention of architects, sculptors and carvers. The Brihadesvara temple which was erected about 1000 A.D. is a contemporary of the Rajarani temple of Bhubaneswar. The temple is a magnificent and dignified edifice consisting of

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a pyramidal spire, made up of ever diminishing tiers, regularly tapering towards the top surmounted by a domica1 pinnacle. In many respects this shrine resembles the Shore Temple at Mahabalipuram. The domica1 pinnacle, however, is different in conception and execution from the amlaka of the Orissan Shrine. The highestshikhara rises straight over the garbha griha from the sanctum sanctorum. The structure is adorned with beautiful sculpture and paintings; inside as well as outside. The Brihadesvara Temple, dedicated to Shiva, stands in a courtyard 500 ft. by 200 ft. and consists of the sanctum sanctorum, large hall a pillared hall and a Nandimandapa arranged on the same axis. The pyramidal vimana is about 190 ft. high consisting of 13 zones in diminishing order and has been so conceived that at no time during the day does the shadow of its pinnacle fall anywhere outside the temple base.

The famous Kailasa temple at Ellora is in a class by itself because it is a rock-cut temple complex, which in many respects resembles the various rathas at Mahabalipuram. This temple was constructed during the reign of the Rashtrakuta King Krishna and belongs to the middle of the 8th century A.D. The carvers at Ellora cut three trenches down into the rock and then began to carve the rock from the top downwards. Even though it is carved on the model of a structural temple, the Kailashnath temple is a rock-cut shrine within a rectangular court. The different parts of the temple are the entrance portico, the vimana and the mandapa as well as a pillared shrine for Shiva's bull, Nandi. Both inside as well as outside the temple, there are beautiful, graceful and dignified sculptural decorations, largely pertaining to the theme of Shiva and Parvati, Sita's abduction and Ravana shaking the mountain.

The gopuram, is the tower, an oblong quadrangle, sometimes a square, with a passage through the centre and is situated on the entrance gateway unlike in the north, or even at the Brihadesvara temple in Tanjore, where the tower-like structure was on the top of the sanctum sanctorum or garbha-griha. In many ways the gopuram could have descended from the Buddhist gateway such as we have already seen at Sanchi and Bharhut, etc. It is crowned by a barrel-vault roof over

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which a large number of pinnacles rise which remind us once again of a barrel roof on a longitudinal hut which used to be made of timber. As stated earlier these gopurams are towering structures, some having 9 storeys, others even 11. The gopuramprovided an excellent opportunity to the sculptor to practice his craft and contain some of the finest sculptures produced in the country. The gopuram at Chidambaram has a series of sculptures showing dance poses of Bharatanatyam. At night time, lights used to be lit in each storey of the gopuram tower and these acted as a sure guide to the nocturnal traveller, acting like a light house or beacon. As a rule the highest gopuram tower was the latest, the earliest being the least high size as in the gopuram of the Meenakshi temple at Madurai. Visitors can climb into these towers to appreciate the carvings at close quarters and incidentally get a marvellous view of the temple complex. South Indian temples of this period are remarkable for the great size of their structures, mandapas and gopurams. In addition elaboratemandapas of hundred pillared type are also constructed during the period of late Vijaynagar and the period of the Nayakas in the 16th century A.D. This is an interesting departure from the evolution of the temple from early times. These pillared halls now become more and more elaborate with pillars showing donor couples, kings, queen, mythical animals with fantastic shapes and size. The paintings over these as well as over the pillars and ceiling are very colourful.In some temples there are tanks surrounded by elegant pillared halls which are functionally and architecturally admirable structures. The temples built in the 12-13th centuries under the patronage of the Hoysalas of Mysore, are at Somnathpur, Belur and Halebid. The well-known Kesava temple at Somnathpur, and the Hoysala temple at Halebid and Belur are veritable treasure houses of ornamental and decorative elements, carved in niches, and intricate vegetal and floral carvings. The vimana is of a star shaped plan with salients and reentering angles with mouldings, multiplication and over-decoration. Not an inch of space is left uncarved and there are animals and other denizens of the forest shown on the lower most three or four mouldings, interspersed with floral and

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creeper designs and, above them all, in more than life size, are shown huge sculptural representations of gods and goddesses, completely covered with by lavish decorations and rich ornaments.

Khajuraho, twenty five miles North of Panna and twenty seven miles of Chhatarpur in Madhya Pradesh is an important place because of the exquisite temples built there by the Chandellas.The Khajuraho temples are cruciform in plan with the long axis from East to West. Built of buff sandstone from the quarries of Panna, these temples have a soft texture and a most pleasing colour. The temples have usually been made on high terraces. Almost all the temples have an inner shrine an assembly hall or mandapa, and an entrance portico. The temples at Khajuraho have a circumambulatory passage also. Some of the temples at Khajuraho are a cluster of five shrines - the main temple surrounded by four others at each corner. In architecture, these types of temples are known as Panchayatana - a temple that has a central shrine surrounded by four other shrines.The Kandariya Temple, the Mahadeva Temple, the Devi Jagadamba Temple, the Chitragupta Temple, the Vishwanatha Temple, the Parvati Temple, the Lakshamana or Chaturbhuja Temple; the Varaha Temple; the Chaunsat Yogini Temple (the only temple made entirely of granite and dedicated to sixty fouryoginis) are some of the very famous and worth studying from the art and architectural point of view.These temples were built between tenth to late twelfth centuries. The South-East of Khajuraho is famous for Jain Temples. The Parsvanatha Temple is most important one whereas the Ghantai Temple is named because of the bell and chain ornaments at its pillars.

The site

The appropriate site for a Mandir, suggest ancient Sanskrit texts, is near water and gardens, where lotus and flowers bloom, where swans, ducks and other birds are heard, where animals rest without fear of injury or harm. These harmonious places were recommended in these texts with the explanation that such are the places where gods play, and thus the best site for Hindu temples.

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While major Hindu Mandirs are recommended at sangams (confluence of rivers), river banks, lakes and seashore, Brhat Samhita and Puranas suggest temples may also be built where a natural source of water is not present. Here too, they recommend that a pond be built preferably in front or to the left of the temple with water gardens. If water is neither present naturally nor by design, water is symbolically present at the consecration of temple or the deity. Temples may also be built, suggests Visnudharmottara in Part III of Chapter 93, inside caves and carved stones, on hill tops affording peaceful views, mountain slopes overlooking beautiful valleys, inside forests and hermitages, next to gardens, or at the head of a town street.

North Indian Temples

The Nagara style which developed for the fifth century is characterized by a beehive shaped tower (called a shikhara, in northern terminology) made up of layer upon layer of architectural elements such as kapotas and gavaksas, all topped by a large round cushion-like element called an amalaka. The plan is based on a square but the walls are sometimes so broken up that the tower often gives the impression of being circular. Moreover, in later developments such as in the Chandella temples, the central shaft was surrounded by many smaller reproductions of itself, creating a spectacular visual effect resembling a fountain.

South Indian Temples

From the seventh century the Dravida or southern style has a pyramid shaped tower consisting of progressively smaller storeys of small pavilions, a narrow throat, and a dome on the top called a shikhara (in southern terminology). The repeated storeys give a horizontal visual thrust to the southern style.

Less obvious differences between the two main temple types include the ground plan, the selection and positioning of stone carved deities on the outside walls and the interior, and the range of decorative elements that are sometimes so numerous as to almost obscure the underlying architecture.

Bearing in mind the vast areas of India dominated by the 'northern' style, i.e. from the Himalayas to the Deccan, it is to be expected that there would be distinct regional variations.

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For example all of the following are classified as Nagara - the simple Parasuramesvara temple at Bhubaneswar in Orissa, consisting only of a shrine and a hall; the temples at Khajuraho with their spectacular superstructures; and the exquisitely carved Surya temple at Modhera. On the other hand the 'southern' style, being restricted to a much smaller geographical area, was more consistent in its development and more predictable in its architectural features and overall appearance.

Temples of the Deccan

In the border areas between the two major styles, particularly in the modern states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, there was a good deal of stylistic overlap as well as several distinctive architectural features. A typical example is the Hoysala temple with its multiple shrines and remarkable ornate carving. In fact such features are sometimes so significant as to justify classifying distinct sub-regional groups.

The type of raw materials available from region to region naturally had a significant impact on construction techniques, carving possibilities and consequently the overall appearance of the temple. The soft soap-stone type material used by the Hoysala architects of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries allowed sculptors working in the tradition of ivory and sandalwood carving to produce the most intricate and ornate of all Indian styles. Hard crystalline rocks like granite typical of the area around Mamallapuram prevented detailed carving and resulted in the shallow reliefs associated with Pallava temples of the seventh and with centuries. In areas without stone, such as parts of Bengal, temples constructed of brick had quite different stylistic characteristics.

Royal patronage also had a very significant effect on the stylistic development of temples, and as we have already seen, regional styles are often identified by the dynasty that produced them. For example we speak of Pallava, Chola, Hoysala, Gupta, Chalukya and Chandella temples.

It might be assumed that temple styles would be different for the various Hindu cults. In fact, this was never the case in

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India. Even Jain temples such as those at Khajuraho were often built in almost identical styles to the Hindu temples.

From the eighth century onward with the development of ever more sophisticated rituals and festivals, the Hindu temple especially in the south started to expand and become more elaborate. There were more mandapas for various purposes such as dancing, assembly, eating, or, for example. To house Nandi, Shiva's sacred mount; more subsidiary shrines and other structures; and more corridors and pillared halls such as the 'thousand-pillared halls'.

But the most significant visual difference between the later northern and southern styles are the gateways. In the north the shikhara remains the most prominent element of the temple and the gateway is usually modest. In the south enclosure walls were built around the whole complex and along these walls, ideally set along the east-west and north-south axes, elaborate and often magnificent gateways called gopurams led the devotees into the sacred courtyard. These gopurams led the devotees into the superstructures and capped with a barrel-shaped roofs were in fact to become the most striking feature of the south Indian temple. They become taller and taller, dwarfing the inner sanctum and its tower and dominating the whole temple site. From the Vijayanagara period (fourteenth to sixteenth century) onward, these highly embellished and often brightly painted structures become extremely numerous. The width of the storeys of pavilions and other architectural elements were carefully adjusted to create a concave contour which is a distinctive characteristic of the Dravida temples seen throughout the south, particularly in Tamil Nadu.

The layout

A Hindu temple design follows a geometrical design called vastu-purusha-mandala. The name is a composite Sanskrit word with three of the most important components of the plan. Mandala means circle, Purusha is universal essence at the core of Hindu tradition, while Vastu means the dwelling structure. Vastupurushamandala is a yantra. The design lays

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out a Hindu temple in a symmetrical, self-repeating structure derived from central beliefs, myths, cardinality and mathematical principles.

The four cardinal directions help create the axis of a Hindu temple, around which is formed a perfect square in the space available. The circle of mandala circumscribes the square. The square is considered divine for its perfection and as a symbolic product of knowledge and human thought, while circle is considered earthly, human and observed in everyday life (moon, sun, horizon, water drop, rainbow). Each supports the other. The square is divided into perfect square grids. In large temples, this is often a 8x8 or 64 grid structure. In ceremonial temple superstructures, this is a 81 sub-square grid. The squares are called "padas". The square is symbolic and has Vedic origins from fire altar, Agni. The alignment along cardinal direction, similarly is an extension of Vedic rituals of three fires. This symbolism is also found among Greek and other ancient civilizations, through the gnomon. In Hindu temple manuals, design plans are described with 1, 4, 9, 16, 25, 36, 49, 64, 81 up to 1024 squares; 1 pada is considered the simplest plan, as a seat for a hermit or devotee to sit and meditate on, do yoga, or make offerings with Vedic fire in front. The second design of 4 padas has a symbolic central core at the diagonal intersection, and is also a meditative layout. The 9 pada design has a sacred surrounded center, and is the template for the smallest temple. Older Hindu temple vastumandalas may use the 9 through 49 pada series, but 64 is considered the most sacred geometric grid in Hindu temples. It is also called Manduka, Bhekapada or Ajira in various ancient Sanskrit texts. Each pada is conceptually assigned to a symbolic element, sometimes in the form of a deity or to a spirit or apasara. The central square(s) of the 64 is dedicated to the Brahman (not to be confused with Brahmin), and are called Brahma padas.

In a Hindu temple's structure of symmetry and concentric squares, each concentric layer has significance. The outermost layer, Paisachika padas, signify aspects of Asuras and evil; the next inner concentric layer is Manusha padas signifying human life; while Devika padas signify aspects of Devas and

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good. The Manusha padas typically houses the ambulatory. The devotees, as they walk around in clockwise fashion through this ambulatory to complete Parikrama (or Pradakshina), walk between good on inner side and evil on the outer side. In smaller temples, the Paisachika pada is not part of the temple superstructure, but may be on the boundary of the temple or just symbolically represented.

The Paisachika padas, Manusha padas and Devika padas surround Brahma padas, which signifies creative energy and serves as the location for temple's primary idol for darsana. Finally at the very center of Brahma padas is Grabhgriya (Purusa Space), signifying Universal Principle present in everything and everyone. The spire of a Hindu temple, called Shikhara in north India and Vamana in south India, is perfectly aligned above the Brahma pada(s).

Beneath the mandala's central square(s) is the space for the formless shapeless all pervasive all connecting Universal Spirit, the Purusha. This space is sometimes referred to as garbha-griya (literally womb house) - a small, perfect square, windowless, enclosed space without ornamentation that represents universal essence. In or near this space is typically a murti (idol). This is the main deity idol, and this varies with each temple. Often it is this idol that gives it a local name, such as Visnu temple, Krishna temple, Rama temple, Narayana temple, Siva temple, Lakshmi temple, Ganesha temple, Durga temple, Hanuman temple, Surya temple, and others. It is this garbha-griya which devotees seek for "darsana" (literally, a sight of knowledge, or vision).

Above the vastu-purusha-mandala is a superstructure with a dome called Shikhara in north India, and Vimana in south India, that stretches towards the sky. Sometimes, in makeshift temples, the dome may be replaced with symbolic bamboo with few leaves at the top. The vertical dimension's cupola or dome is designed as a pyramid, conical or other mountain-like shape, once again using principle of concentric circles and squares (see below). Scholars suggest that this shape is inspired by cosmic mountain of Meru or Himalayan Kailasa, the abode of gods according to Vedic mythology.

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In larger temples, the outer three padas are visually decorated with carvings, paintings or images meant to inspire the devotee. In some temples, these images or wall reliefs may be stories from Hindu Epics, in others they may be Vedic tales about right and wrong or virtues and vice, in some they may be idols of minor or regional deities. The pillars, walls and ceilings typically also have highly ornate carvings or images of the four just and necessary pursuits of life - kama, artha, dharma and moksa. This walk around is called pradakshina.

Large temples also have pillared halls called mandapa. One on the east side, serves as the waiting room for pilgrims and devotees. The mandapa may be a separate structure in older temples, but in newer temples this space is integrated into the temple superstructure. Mega temple sites have a main temple surrounded by smaller temples and shrines, but these are still arranged by principles of symmetry, grids and mathematical precision. An important principle found in the layout of Hindu temples is mirroring and repeating fractal-like design structure, each unique yet also repeating the central common principle, one which Susan Lewandowski refers to as "an organism of repeating cells".

Exceptions to the square grid principle

Predominant number of Hindu temples exhibit the perfect square grid principle. However, there are some exceptions. For example, the Teli-ka-mandir in Gwalior, built in 8th century CE is not a square but is a rectangle in 2:3 proportion. Further, the temple explores a number of structures and shrines in 1:1, 1:2, 1:3, 2:5, 3:5 and 4:5 ratios. These ratios are exact, suggesting the architect intended to use these harmonic ratios, and the rectangle pattern was not a mistake, nor an arbitrary approximation. Other examples of non-square harmonic ratios are found at Naresar temple site of Madhya Pradesh and Nakti-Mata temple near Jaipur, Rajasthan. Michael Meister suggests that these exceptions mean the ancient Sanskrit manuals for temple building were guidelines, and Hinduism permitted its artisans flexibility in expression and aesthetic independence.

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3

Different Styles of architecture

An ancient India, temple architecture of high standard developed in almost all regions. The distinct architectural style of temple construction in different parts was a result of geographical, climatic, ethnic, racial, historical and linguistic diversities. Ancient Indian temples are classified in three broad types. This classification is based on different architectural styles, employed in the construction of the temples. Three main style of temple architecture are the Nagara or the Northern style, the Dravida or the Southern style and the Vesara or Mixed style. But at the same time there are also some regional styles of Bengal, Kerala and the Himalayan areas.

Perhaps the most important part of the ancient Indian temples is decoration. It is reflected in the multitude details of figured sculpture as well as in the architectural elements. Another important component of Indian temples was the garba-griha or the womb chamber, housing the deity of the temple. The garbha-griha was provided with a circumambulation passage around. However, there are also many subsidiary shrines within temple complexes, more common in the South Indian temple.

In the initial stages of its evolution, the temples of North and South India were distinguished on the basis of some specific features like sikhara and gateways. In the north Indian temples, the sikhara remained the most prominent component while the gateway was generally unassuming. The most

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prominent features of South Indian temples were enclosures around the temples and the Gopurams (huge gateways). The Gopurams led the devotees into the sacred courtyard. On the other hand there were many common features in the Northern and the Southern styles. These included the ground plan, positioning of stone-carved deities on the outside walls and the interior, and the range of decorative elements.

Some of the best examples of the north Indian style (Nagara style) of temple architecture are the Khajuraho Group of temples, Sun temple, Konark, Sun temple at Modhera, Gujarat and Ossian temple, Gujarat. The finest examples of Dravidian style (south Indian style) are temples of Tanjore, Madurai, Mahabalipuram, Badami, Pattadakal and Kanchipuram.

NAGARA ARCHITECTURE

Nagara temples have two distinct features :

- In plan, the temple is a square with a number of graduated projections in the middle of each side giving a cruciform shape with a number of re-entrant angles on each side.
- In elevation, a Sikhara, i.e., tower gradually inclines inwards in a convex curve, using a concentric rotating-squares and circles principle.

The projections in the plan are also carried upwards to the top of the Sikhara and, thus, there is strong emphasis on vertical lines in elevation. The Nagara style is widely distributed over a greater part of India, exhibiting distinct varieties and ramifications in lines of evolution and elaboration according to each locality. An example of Nagara architecture is the Kandariya Mahadeva Temple.

Dravidian architecture

Dravidian style temples consist almost invariably of the four following parts, differing only according to the age in which they were executed:

1. The principal part, the temple itself, is called the Vimana (or Vimanam). It is always square in plan and surmounted by a pyramidal roof of one or more stories; it contains the cell where the image of the god or his emblem is placed.

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2. The porches or Mandapas (or Mantapams), which always cover and precede the door leading to the cell.
3. Gate-pyramids, Gopurams, which are the principal features in the quadrangular enclosures that surround the more notable temples.
4. Pillared halls or Chaultris—properly Chawadis — used for various purposes, and which are the invariable accompaniments of these temples.

Besides these, a temple always contains temple tanks or wells for water (used for sacred purposes or the convenience of the priests), dwellings for all grades of the priesthood are attached to it, and other buildings for state or convenience.

Badami Chalukya architecture

The Badami Chalukya Architecture | Chalukya style originated during 450 CE in Aihole and perfected in Pattadakal and Badami.

Chalukya Architecture of temples at Aihole & Pattadakal

The period of Badami Chalukyas was a glorious era in the history of Indian architecture. The capital of the Chalukyas, Vatapi (Badami, in Bagalkot district, North Karnataka in Karnataka) is situated at the mouth of a ravine between two rocky hills. Between 500 and 757 CE, Badami Chalukyas established the foundations of cave temple architecture, on the banks of the Malaprabha River. Those styles mainly include Aihole, Pattadakal and Badami. The sites were built out of sandstone cut into enormous blocks from the outcrops in the chains of the Kaladgi hills.

At Badami, Chalukyas carved some of the finest cave temples. Mahakuta, the large trees under which the shrine nestles.

In Aihole, known as the "Cradle of Indian architecture," there are over 150 temples scattered around the village. The Lad Khan Temple is the oldest. The Durga Temple is notable for its semi-circular apse, elevated plinth and the gallery that encircles the sanctum sanctorum. A sculpture of Vishnu sitting atop a large cobra is at Hutchimali Temple. The Ravalphadi cave temple celebrates the many forms of Shiva. Other temples include the Konthi temple complex and the Meguti Jain temple.

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Pattadakal is a (World Heritage Site), where one finds the Virupaksha temple; it is the biggest temple, having carved scenes from the great epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Other temples at Pattadakal are Mallikarjuna, Kashivishwanatha, Galaganatha and Papanath.

Gadag Architecture style

The Gadag style of architecture is also called Western Chalukya architecture. The style flourished for 150 years (1050 to 1200 CE); in this period, about 50 temples were built. Some examples are the Saraswati temple in the Trikuteshwara temple complex at Gadag, the Doddabasappa Temple at Dambal, the Kasivisvesvara Temple at Lakkundi, and the Amriteshwara temple at Annigeri. which is marked by ornate pillars with intricate sculpture. This style originated during the period of the Kalyani Chalukyas (also known as Western Chalukya) Someswara I.

Stepped floorplan of Dattatreya Temple (one side of the shrine) with five projections at Chattarki in Gulbarga district, 12th century CE

Shrine wall and superstructure in Kasivisvesvara temple at Lakkundi

Ornate Gadag style pillars at Sarasvati Temple, Trikuteshwara temple complex at Gadag

Kalinga architecture style

Simplified schema of a Kalinga architecture temple

The design which flourished in eastern Indian state of Odisha and Northern Andhra Pradesh are called Kalinga style of architecture. The style consists of three distinct type of temples namely Rekha Deula, Pidha Deula and Khakhara Deula. Deula means "temple" in the local language. The former two are associated with Vishnu, Surya and Shiva temple while the third is mainly with Chamunda and Durga temples. The Rekha deula and Khakhara deula houses the sanctum sanctorum while the Pidha Deula constitutes outer dancing and offering halls.

The prominent examples of Rekha Deula are Lingaraj Temple of Bhubaneswar and Jagannath Temple of Puri. One

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of the prominent example of Khakhara Deula is Vaital Deula. The Konark Sun Temple is a living example of Pidha Deula.

The three types of Deulas

Mâru-Gurjara temple architecture

Mâru-Gurjara temple architecture originated somewhere in 6th century in and around areas of Rajasthan. Mâru-Gurjara architecture show the deep understanding of structures and refined skills of Rajasthani craftmen of bygone era. Mâru-Gurjara architecture has two prominent styles: Maha-Maru and Maru-Gurjara. According to M. A. Dhaky, Maha-Maru style developed primarily in Marudesa, Sapadalaksa, Surasena and parts of Uparamala whereas Maru-Gurjara originated in Medapata, Gurjaradesa-Arbuda, Gurjaradesa-Anarta and some areas of Gujarat. Scholars such as George Michell, M.A. Dhaky, Michael W. Meister and U.S. Moorti believe that Mâru-Gurjara temple architecture is entirely Western Indian architecture and is quite different from the North Indian temple architecture.

This further shows the cultural and ethnic separation of Rajasthanis from north Indian culture. There is a connecting link between Mâru-Gurjara architecture and Hoysala temple architecture. In both of these styles architecture is treated sculpturally.

Examples of Mâru-Gurjara temple architecture

Chennakesava Temple, a protected heritage site by Archeological Survey of India and amongst the finest examples of Hoysala architecture, Somanathapura

Contemporary architecture

Amongst the foremost interpreters of Indian art and architecture are Dr. V. Ganapati Sthapati, Stella Kramrisch, Vidya Dehija, M.A. Dhaky, Lokesh Chandra, Kapila Vatsyayan, and Dr. Jessie J. Mercay. The greatest living traditional temple architect is Dr. V. Ganapati Sthapati (Chennai), the only living Shilpi Guru. He is followed by his grand nephew Santhanam Krishna Sthapati of Chennai. Both are associated with The

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American University of Mayonic Science and Technology, which teaches Vaastu Shastras and Sthaptya Veda architecture.

The BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir & Complex in Lilburn, Georgia (USA) is a great example of how traditional Hindu architectural elements have been combined with modern building codes and construction techiques. Tony Patel, partner with Newport Design Group Architects in Alpharetta, Georgia served as the project coordinating Architect. The firm has been involved in several other significant Indian religious projects as well.

South Indian Architecture

The south Indian style of temple architecture is very distinct from that of the rest of India. It is convenient to resolve the types of architecture into four periods corresponding to the principal kingdoms which ruled in southern India down the centuries.

Pallava (AD 600-900)

The greatest accomplishments of Pallava architecture are the rock- cut of temples at Mahabalipuram. The Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram is a fully realized temple complex with a towered sanctuary andmandapa (columned hall preceding the sanctuary).

Chola (900-1150)

Chola architecture achieved its peak at Thanjavur, the capital established by the Chola ruler Rajaraja I. The sanctuaries have rising pyramid towers crowned with dome-like roofs. Sculptures and paintings adorn the walls. Bronze sculptures of this era are the finest in southern India. These are delicately modeled, especially those depicting the Lord Shiva in his many aspects.

Hoysala (1100-1350)

Temples erected during the Hoysala kings have complicated plans with numerous angled projections. Carved surfaces are executed with remarkable precision, usually in chlorite. The columns are lathe-turned or are multi-faceted.

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Temples from the Hoysala period can still be seen at Belur, Halebid and Sringeri. After the reign of the Hoysalas, architectural traditions were interrupted by Muslim raids at the end of the 13th century. Monumental temple building resumed later under the Vijayanagara empire.

Vijayanagara (1350-1565)

By the 16th century almost all of southern India was part of the Vijayanagara empire. The characteristic feature of this period is the development of the temple complex: concentric series of rectangular enclosure walls with the gopuras (towered gateways) in the middle of each side. Of the numerous Vijayanagara complexes in southern India, the most magnificent are those at Kanchipuram, Thiruvannamalai and Vellore.

During this time, Kerala on the western coast developed a distinct style of architecture. Because of the heavy rainfall, the temples here were roofed with sloping tiers of metal or Terra cotta tiles. The Vadakkunatha temple at Trichur dates from the 12th century. Later temples are found at Chengannur, Kaviyum and Vaikom.

Orissan Architecture

The temples at Orissa, or Kalinga which is its ancient name, provide some of the finest examples of the Indo-Aryan style of temple architecture, which is distinct from the south Indian style. The main group of temples is concentrated in the town of Bhubaneshwar where there are over thirty of them. A few miles from this temple town are two of the largest buildings in eastern India, the temple of Jagannath at Puri and the Sun temple at Konarak. Other examples of this style of architecture can also be seen further north on the southern borders of Bengal.

The earliest of these temples date from the eighth century A.D and the largest and latest, the Sun temple at Konarak, was erected in the middle of the thirteenth century. Thus these temples represent the scene of sustained architectural activity for nearly five hundred years. The earliest temples (c. A.D 750 to 900) are all present in Bhubaneshwar. Even in this early phase, the sculptural treatment was elaborate.

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The two temples of monumental proportions, the Lingaraja at Bhubaneshwar and the Jagannath at Puri, were constructed around A.D 1000. Both these temples consist of four structures which comprise the fully developed Orissan style of temple architecture. Even today, the great tower of the Lingaraja dominates the entire town of Bhubaneshwar with its height and size; the Jagannath temple at Puri is still larger and of a slightly later date. In colonial times, an elaborate set of representations was built around the Jagannath temple: it became iconic of Hindu fanaticism, as devotees were supposed to hurl themselves in front of the temple's large chariot and get crushed by its gigantic wheels. The word 'Juggernaut' is derived from Jagannath.

The grandest achievement of this school of architecture is the Sun temple at Konarak (c. A.D. 1250) , standing entirely by itself some twenty miles from Puri. The temple is dedicated to Surya, the Sun god, who has traditionally been represented as riding his winged chariot drawn by seven horses. The temple is therefore fashioned like a ratha (chariot) and the base of the structure has 12 giant wheels, each nearly ten feet high. The entire surface is filled out with sculpted forms, some of outstanding beauty, while the others are of a markedly erotic character. These indicate the emergence of a particular phase of Hinduism, better known as Tantrism. However, it appears that this cult soon lost much of its following, and today the temple lies abandoned, under the care of the Archaeological Survey of India, unlike the Jagannath temple at Puri which is an important pilgrimage site. Though much of this structure is now in ruins, its sheer grandeur and size still inspires awe.

Kanchipuram

Kanchipuram is among the most famous of the 'temple cities' of Tamil Nadu. Its temples house different Hindu sects. Though today it is only a destination for pilgrims, and a repository of major architectural monuments, in antiquity it occupied a more preeminent place in the history of South India. The city was the political capital of the Pallava rulers during the 7th - 9th centuries. It remained an important city during the succeeding Chola and Vijayanagara periods.The

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Kailasanatha temple is the finest structural project of the Pallava ruler Rajasimha. The temple is almost entirely constructed of sandstone and is integrated into a coherent complex. A large variety of Shaiva images adorns the outer walls; the inner walls were once painted. A polished linga (phallus, the symbol of regeneration associated with Shiva) is enshrined within.

The Ekambareshvara temple is the principle Shaiva sanctuary and its soaring gopuras dominate the city's skyline. This temple was erected in 1509 by the Vijayanagara emperor Krishnadeva Raya. The temple is preceded by a long columned mandapa into which earlier shrines and altars have been incorporated. A corridor surrounds the principle shrine on four sides, presenting a continuous sequence of receding piers.The Vardhamana temple is the most important Vaishanava temple. Local legend has it that the temple commemorates the site where the Lord Brahma performed ayajna (fire sacrifice) to invoke the presence of Vishnu. It has a long history spanning the Chola and the Vijayanagara periods. One of the two high towered gopuras resemble 12th-13th century Chola projects while the other is characteristic of the 16th century Vijayanagara period. The main sanctuary enshrines bronze images of Vishnu flanked by his consorts. Some specimens of Vijayanagara paintings are still preserved on the walls.

Mahabalipuram

Mahabalipuram, or Mamallapuram, was the chief seaport of the Pallavas who ruled over much of South India from as early as the first century B.C to the eighth century A.D., and it is now recognized as the site of some of the greatest architectural and sculptural achievements in India. Under the reign of Narasimha Varman (c. 630), this seaport began to grow as a great artistic center. The beautiful cave temples and gigantic open air reliefs carved from blocks of granite date to the seventh century.

The descent to earth of the sacred river Ganges is the subject of the most prominent relief. The relief depicts the

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auspicious moment when the river flows down to the earth after the intervention of the lord Shiva. About 20 feet high and 80 feet long, it contains over a hundred figures of gods, men and beasts. A cistern was provided at the top which released water on special occasions to add a touch of reality to the tableau.

At the southern edge of Mahabalipuram is a group of five free-standing temples. Four of them were carved out of a single long granite boulder. These temples are actually detailed replicas of ancient wooden structures. These temples represent the rathas(chariots) of Arjuna, Bhima, Dharmaraja, Nakula-Sahadeva — the five Pandava princes of the epic Mahabharata — and their common wife, Draupadi. Work on these five temples was stopped after the death of Narasimha Varman in 668.

In early eighth century, work was begun on the Shore Temple at Mahabalipuram. This temple was built to honour Lord Shiva. Unlike the temples described above, the Shore Temple was built with granite blocks. The design of the Shore Temple is significant because it is the earliest known example of a stone-built temple in South India. The Shore Temple also influenced the architecture of the Cholas, who succeeded the Pallavas as the dominant dynasty in the area now covered by Tamil Nadu.

Khajuraho

One of the most celebrated manifestations of Indian architecture is to be found in a group of temples at Khajuraho in central India. Situated a hundred miles south-east of the town of Jhansi in the modern-day state of Madhya Pradesh, these temples are over thirty in number. These temples, unlike many others in central or south India, do not illustrate a development over a long period of time, but were erected over a relatively narrow period of hundred years from A.D. 950. The Khajuraho temples represent, one might say, a happy and almost unique coincidence of religious emotion, abundant patronage, artistic genius, and aesthetic sensibility. Fortunately, these temples have weathered the climate for a thousand years and have withstood neglect surprisingly well.

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The Khajuraho temples were built during the reign of the Chandelas. While some show marks of a Shaivite sensibility, others clearly manifest the influence of Vaishnaism, Jainism, and tantrism. These temples have an architectural character distinct from that of any other group of temples elsewhere in the country. Instead of being contained within the customary enclosure wall, each temple stands on a high and solid masonry terrace. Though none of the temples are very large, they are still imposing structures because of their elegant proportions and rich surface sculpture.

Unlike the rather plain treatment of other central Indian temple interiors, the Khajuraho temples are richly decorated with sculpture. Other than numerous deities enshrined in wall niches, there are attendants, graceful "maidens" in a variety of provocative postures, dancers, musicians and embracing couples. On one temple alone, the figures thus depicted are over six hundred and fifty in number. Many of these compositions display great sensuality and warmth. There are also scenes of explicit sexual activity which possibly illustrate the tantric rites that accompanied temple worship. It is quite reliably said that some of the sexual postures follow the Kama Sutra, the ancient Indian manual of love-making.

The Ancient Hindu Architecture

Talking about dimensions, the Mughals built the Red Fort in Delhi and it still amazes everyone today. Way back in 300BC, Chandragupta Maurya's fort along the Ganges in Bihar stretched for an impossible nine miles long and a mile and a half wide! Made chiefly of wood, the fort housed a palace too. In comparison, the Red Fort is about 2.5kms in diameter.

However, only a couple of measly teak beams have survived from Chandragupta's 'wooden' fort. The architecture of the Maurya's was embalmed in timber, for rock and stone were not as freely in use then. The Mauryan period was also responsible for perfecting the art of polishing, so much so that wood glistened like a mirror.

However, Hindu temples are what Hindu religious architecture was all about. They are not merely places of

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worship; they are the very abode of the god inside – in spirit, soul and body. After a period of decay while Buddhism was the popular religion, the revival of Hinduism in the 5century AD gave a new boost to sculptors. Sheer rock was widely available, and sculptors carved out massive temples out of a single rock face. Technical skill required was high, and the cave temples in Ajanta and Ellora are perfect examples of the heights Hindu art could go to. Under orders from the rulers of the Rashtrakuta dynasty, sculptors carved out temples from gigantic solid stone after moving them away from the mountainside!

Kanchipuram Temples

From the 7th to 9th century AD, the Pallava kings were busy in the Tamil area building Kanchipuram, a cluster of over a hundred religious Hindu shrines. Each one these shrines consisted of a sanctuary with a rising stepped tower. Early temples were mostly dedicated to Shiva, and were sparsely adorned in the interiors. Later, however, pillars bore the brunt of the carver's tool, and these came to be richly adorned with scenes from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

Thanjavur Temple

In Thanjavur, the capital of the Cholas in the 10 century, there stands a temple made entirely of granite. 207 feet high, the Thanjavur Hindu religious temple is famous for its bronze and stone sculpture and for the narrative murals in the interior. Dynasties after the Cholas continued building temples, adding to the standard set by the Cholas and striving to build higher than before. Gopuras were massive temples, twice as high as they were broad with uneven storeys which diminished as they ascended. The construction of the temple itself was a complicated one, with carved and painted exteriors and interiors. Unlike Muslims, Hindus emphasized on liberal usage of images of gods, goddesses, their vehicles and even their devotees. This was mainly true for temples in southern India, while northern temples were lesser decorated as compared to their southern counterparts.

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The Khajuraho Temples

The temples in Khajuraho (950-1050AD), while dedicated to gods, are splattered with images of a sexual nature. Perhaps these explicit images were carved into stone to ensure magical protection through sexual energy. The belief was that lightning, or the God of Thunder, would never strike a couple locked in sexual embrace, be it of stone or flesh.

The Chariot Temples of Southern India.

The most amazing aspect of Hindu architecture in the 15 century would probably be the chariot temples in southern India. These religious temples inevitably feature massive rock cut chariots dedicated to the 2 century BC Aryans. The Aryans were the first users of the wheel, and their chariots carried them to glorious victories throughout northern India. These huge chariots are drawn by elephants, although in comparison these stone animals are not even one tenth the size of the vehicle.

The 16 century saw the revival of Hindu temple architecture, especially in the south. Apart from the main deity, this time round there were images of a thousand gods, goddesses and mortal beings on the outside walls. Musicians, lesser gods, demons, armed guards, birds, cows; name it and you could find it on a temple facade. Beasts right out of folklore could be found in niches, carved out with such detail that they seemed almost alive.

The Pattern of Temple Construction

The construction of Hindu temples – whether in the North or in the South – essentially followed a similar pattern.

There's the sanctuary or the vimana of which the upper and outer pyramidical and tapering portion is called the shikhara, or pinnacle. The vimana is a rather dark and gloomy place and houses the divine deity. This small area is called garbha griha, literally meaning 'womb house'. The entrance is through a doorway, normally from the eastern side. The doorway is reached through a mandapa or pillared hall, where devotees congregate for prayers.

However, earlier temples may have had the mandapa at a little distance from the main Hindu temple (the Shore Temple

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in Mamallapuram near Chennai, circa AD 700), although this practice was done away with in later constructions. Later it became necessary to unite both buildings, making way for the antarala or intermediate vestibule. A porch or a smaller room called ardha mandapa leads up to a hall (mandapa), which in turn goes into a maha mandapa.

The most perfect example of a temple on this structure are the Khajuraho temples. Here, each chamber has its own separate pyramidical roof rising in gradual steps so that the final sanctum's roof towers up, surrounded by smaller spires, finally forming a graceful, rising stepped pyramid.

The Roof Architecture

In some parts of India, the ascending pyramid roof format was not followed. The roof in such temples was still pyramidical, but was formed of layers which gradually became narrower as they rose. A courtyard was built around the religious temple, and sometimes a wall would be constructed to ensure seclusion. The outside walls were treated by carving in an orderly group of repetitive miniatures. The shikhar or tapering roof was specifically based on this design which may have originated from the domed huts of central and eastern India.

Nagara or the North Indian Temple Style

Developed around 5th century, the Nagara style is characterized by a beehive shaped tower called a shikhara, in northern terminology made up of layer upon layer of architectural elements such as kapotas and gavaksas, all topped by a large round cushion-like element called an amalaka. Even though the plan is based on a square, the walls are broken up so that the tower offers the impression of being circular. Later developments involved the central shaft being surrounded by many smaller reproductions which created a spectacular visual effect resembling a fountain. The best example for this is the Chandella temples.

Dravida or South Indian Temple Style

Developed around 7th century, the Dravida or the Southern style has a pyramid shaped tower consisting of

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progressively smaller storey of small pavilions, a narrow throat, and a dome on the top called a shikhara. The horizontal visual thrust is given by the repeated storey.

Less obvious differences between the two main temple types can be seen in the ground plan, the selection and positioning of stone carved deities on the outside walls and the interior, and the range of decorative elements. The northern style dominated the vast areas of India from the Himalayas to the Deccan and varied distinctly from region to region. But the southern style occupying a much smaller geographical area was very consistent in its development and more predictable in architectural features.

THE VESARA OR THE HYBRID OR THE DECCAN TEMPLE STYLE

The Vesara style existed in the border areas between the two major styles, particularly in the modern states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. It is characterized by a good deal of stylistic overlap as well as several distinctive architectural features. A typical example is the Hoysala temple with its multiple shrines and remarkable ornate carving.

Indo-Greek art

The art of the Indo-Greeks is poorly documented, and few works of art (apart from their coins and a few stone palettes) are directly attributed to them. The coinage of the Indo-Greeks however is generally considered as some of the most artistically brilliant of Antiquity. The Hellenistic heritage (Ai-Khanoum) and artistic proficiency of the Indo-Greek would suggest a rich sculptural tradition as well, but traditionally very few sculptural remains have been attributed to them. On the contrary, most Gandharan Hellenistic works of art are usually attributed to the direct successors of the Indo-Greeks in India in the 1st century CE, such as the nomadic Indo-Scythians, the Indo-Parthians and, in an already decadent state, the Kushans In general, Gandharan sculpture cannot be dated exactly, leaving the exact chronology open to interpretation.

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Incipient Greco-Buddhist art

Gandharan Athena.

The possibility of a direct connection between the Indo-Greeks and Greco-Buddhist art has been reaffirmed recently as the dating of the rule of Indo-Greek kings has been extended to the first decades of the 1st century CE, with the reign of Strato II in the Punjab. Also, Foucher, Tarn and more recently Boardman, Bussagli or McEvilley have taken the view that some of the most purely Hellenistic works of northwestern India and Afghanistan, may actually be wrongly attributed to later centuries, and instead belong to a period one or two centuries earlier, to the time of the Indo-Greeks in the 2nd-1st century BCE:

This is particularly the case of some purely Hellenistic works in Hadda, Afghanistan, an area which "might indeed be the cradle of incipient Buddhist sculpture in Indo-Greek style". Referring to one of the Buddha triads in Hadda (drawing), in which the Buddha is sided by very Classical depictions of Herakles/Vajrapani and Tyche/Hariti, Boardman explains that both figures "might at first (and even second) glance, pass as, say, from Asia Minor or Syria of the first or second century BC (...) these are essentially Greek figures, executed by artists fully conversant with far more than the externals of the Classical style". Many of the works of art at Hadda can also be compared to the style of the 2nd century BCE sculptures of the Hellenistic world, such as those of the Temple of Olympia at Bassae in Greece, which could also suggest roughly contemporary dates.

Alternatively, it has been suggested that these works of art may have been executed by itinerant Greek artists during the time of maritime contacts with the West from the 1st to the 3rd century CE.

The supposition that such highly Hellenistic and, at the same time Buddhist, works of art belong to the Indo-Greek period would be consistent with the known Buddhist activity of the Indo-Greeks (the Milinda Panha etc...), their Hellenistic cultural heritage which would naturally have induced them

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to produce extensive statuary, their know artistic proficiency as seen on their coins until around 50 BCE, and the dated appearance of already complex iconography incorporating Hellenistic sculptural codes with the Bimaran casket in the early 1st century CE.

Indo-Greeks in the art of Gandhara

Hellenistic culture in the Indian subcontinent: Greek clothes, amphoras, wine and music (Detail of Chakhil-i-Ghoundi stupa, Hadda, Gandhara, 1st century CE).

The Greco-Buddhist art of Gandhara, beyond the omnipresence of Greek style and stylistic elements which might be simply considered as an enduring artistic tradition, offers numerous depictions of people in Greek Classicalrealistic style, attitudes and fashion (clothes such as the chiton and the himation, similar in form and style to the 2nd century BCE Greco-Bactrian statues of Ai-Khanoum, hairstyle), holding contraptions which are characteristic of Greek culture (amphoras, "kantaros" Greek drinking cups), in situations which can range from festive (such as Bacchanalian scenes) to Buddhist-devotional.

Uncertainties in dating make it unclear whether these works of art actually depict Greeks of the period of Indo-Greek rule up to the 1st century BCE, or remaining Greek communities under the rule of the Indo-Parthians or Kushans in the 1st and 2nd century CE.

Stone palettes

Numerous early stone palettes found in Gandhara are considered as direct productions of the Indo-Greeks during the 2nd to the 1st century BCE. The art style of the palettes later evolved under the Indo-Scythians and Indo-Parthians, but production stopped with the advent of the Kushans. Usually these palettes represent people in Greek dress in mythological or gallant scenes.

Hellenistic groups

Greek Buddhist devotees, holding plantain leaves, in purely Hellenistic style, inside Corinthian columns, Buner relief, Victoria and Albert Museum.

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A series of reliefs, several of them known as the Buner reliefs which were taken during the 19th century from Buddhist structures near the area of Buner in northern Pakistan, depict in perfect Hellenistic style gatherings of people in Greek dress, socializing, drinking or playing music. Some other of these reliefs depict Indo-Scythian soldiers in uniform, sometimes playing instruments. Finally, revelling Indian in dhotis richly adorned with jewelry are also shown. These are considered some of the most artistically perfect, and earliest, of Gandharan sculptures, and are thought to exalt multicultural interaction within the context of Buddhism, in the 1st century BCE or the 1st century CE.

Hellenistic drinking scene, Sar Khi Derri.

Bacchic scenes

Greeks harvesting grapes, Greeks drinking and reveling, scenes of erotical courtship are also numerous, and seem to relate to some of the most remarkable traits of Greek culture. These reliefs also belong to Buddhist structures, and it is sometimes suggested that they might represent some kind of paradisical world after death.

Lay devotee couple in Hellenistic dress (right, man holding a lamp), and Buddhist monks (shaven, left), circambulating a stupa.

Depictions of people in Hellenistic dress within a Buddhist context are also numerous. Some show a Greek devotee couple circambulating stupas together with shaven monks, others Greek protagonists are incorporated in Buddhist jataka stories of the life of the Buddha (relief of The Great Departure), others are simply depicted as devotees on the columns of Buddhist structures. A few famous friezes, including one in the British Museum, also depict the story of the Trojan horse. It is unclear whether these reliefs actually depict contemporary Greek devotees in the area of Gandhara, or if they are just part of a remaining artistic tradition. Most of these reliefs are usually dated to the 1st-3rd century CE.

Indo-Corinthian capitalre presenting a Buddhist devotee wearing a Greek cloak (chlamys) attached by a fibula. Dated to the 1st century BCE. Butkara Stupa.

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Sculpture in India

There was an almost complete suppression of individuality in Indian sculpture. This is because the figures are conceived of as shapes that are more perfect than any to be found in human models.

The tradition of plastic art in India dates from the Indus Valley civilization of 2500-1800 BCE, when small items of bronze sculpture and terracotta sculpturewere produced. An early masterpiece is The Dancing Girl of Mohenjo-Daro(c.2500-2000 BCE, National Museum, New Delhi), arguably the finest surviving statuette of the Indus Valley culture. This was followed by the great circular stone pillars and carved lions of the Maurya period (c. 250 BCE), and the mature Indian gigurative sculpture of the second and first centuries BCE, in which Hindu and Buddhist themes were already well established. (For 2nd millennium arts in China, see Shang Dynasty art c.1600-1000 BCE.) A wide range of sculptural styles subsequently emerged in different parts of India over succeeding centuries, but by about 900 CE India sculpture had reached a form that has lasted with little change up to modern times. This sculpture is distinguished not by a sense of plastic fullness but rather by its linear character: the figure is conceived from the standpoint of its outline, and typically is graceful and slender with supple limbs. From 900 CE onwards, this sculpture was used mainly as architectural decoration with huge numbers of relatively small figures of mediocre quality being produced for this purpose.

Note: For a guide to the principles behind Eastern painting and sculpture as exemplified by art in China, see: Traditional Chinese Art: Characteristics. For a comparison with another Far Eastern culture, see: Korean Art (c.3000 BCE onwards).

Schools of Painting

There is no one style of painting in India. Geography, climate, local cultural traditions, demographics all help to shape art along regional lines. Also, outside artistic influences are more strongly felt in border regions. Not surprisingly therefore, Indian painting is a complex patchwork of differing

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styles, with different approaches to both figure drawing and figure painting. Here are a few examples.

Madhubani

Practiced in the Mithila region of Bihar state, India, the origins of Madhubani painting traditionally derive from the time of the Ramayana, when King Janak commissioned artists to portray the marriage of his daughter, Sita, with Sri Rama who was regarded as the incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu.

Mughal

Mughal painting is a miniaturist style of Indian painting, typically executed to illustrate texts and manuscripts. It emerged and flourished during the the Mughal Empire in the sixteenth-nineteenth centuries, coinciding with the upsurge in the art of illumination in Persia, which reached its heyday during the Safavid Dynasty (1501-1722). In fact, Mughal pictures were a blend of Indian and Islamic art. One of the key patrons of Mughal painting was Akbar (1556-1605). At Fatehpur Sikri, he employed the two Persian master painters Abdus Samad and Mir Sayyid Ali, and attracted artists from throughout India and Persia. They painted on cloth using vivid reds, blues and greens, as well more muted Persian colours of pink and peach.

Rajput

Another type of miniature court-style painting, Rajput art flourished during the eighteenth century, in the royal courts of Rajputana. Typically it depicts a variety of themes, including Krishna's life, epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, as well as landscapes, and people. Colours used were usually extracted from minerals, plants, even conch shells. Brushes used by Rajput artists were typically very fine and tapered.

Mysore

Noted for their elegance, subtle colours, and intricate detail, Mysore painting is an important form of classical art from Southern India. Mysore paintings portray Hindu Gods

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and Goddesses and scenes from Hindu mythology. The process of making a Mysore painting involves a preliminary sketch of the image which is then covered by a gesso paste made of Zinc oxide and Arabic gum to give a slightly raised effect. Afterwards a thin gold foil is pasted. The rest of the drawing is then pasted using watercolour.

Bengal

An avant garde, nationalist movement which reacted against the dominant academic style of art in India as promoted by both Indian and British art schools, the Bengal School of Art was an influential style of painting that developed in India during the British Raj in the early twentieth century. Its influence waned with the spread of modernist ideas in the 1920s.

Arts And Crafts

As well as painting, sculpture and architecture, India has a rich tradition of crafts including gold-work, silver and other precious metalwork, paper-art, weaving and designing of artifacts such as jewellery and toys. Not surprisingly, this wealth of talent and ingenuity now includes some of the world's most innovative computer software designers.

Sculptures had been the predominant mode of visual art in ancient India. A variety of sculptures are seen in Indian temples, caves and palaces that survive to this date. However with the advent of modernism in Indian art, painters took over the cudgels of avant-garde expression, while sculptors remained mostly occupied with commissioned works of statues.

Among the few important avant-garde sculptors of 20th century India, the name of Deviprasad Chowdhury stands apart. A nationalist artist, Deviprasad had depicted the struggle of common man in British India in a style reminiscent of baroque and modern classicist works of contemporary India. His work "Triumph of labour" was one of the masterpieces of his time. Another important work today adorn the Gyarah Murti Marg in New Delhi.

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However the father of modern sculpture in India was Ramkinker Baij. Ramkinker, was a prolific sculptor, who had used a variety of materials and experimented with many kinds of forms, geometric abstraction and minimalism. His disciples included such important artists like Sankho Choudhury who was later instrumental to the establishment of one of India's premier art schools at Baroda.

In the post-independence era, Somenath Hore had come into prominence with his sculptures mostly made in the small format which could be carried and exhibited alongside paintings. . He is thus often credited for bringing sculptors closer to painters in the art circles. Somenath Hore was influenced by the communist movement and his works reflected the ideals of socialist realism. He was one of the main sculptors of his time who was responsible for taking sculptures to common man.

Along with Somenath Hore, other important sculptors of this era are Satish Gujral, Krishna Reddi, Tapan Talukdar,

Post-liberalization era saw the emergence of new ideals and art today no longer serves any dogma or ideology. Most sculptors now concentrate more on creating artworks which can inspire awe as can be seen in the works of Anish Kapoor, Subodh Gupta, Ravinder Reddi and Dhruva Mistry.

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4

Buddist Temple Architecture

The Buddhist architecture has its root deeply implanted in the Indian soil- the birthplace of the Buddha's teachings. The Buddhist architecture began with the development of various symbols, representing aspects of the Buddha's life (563 BCE - 483 BCE). For the first time, it was the Indian emperor Ashoka, who not only established Buddhism as the state religion of his large Magadh empire, but also opted for the architectural monuments to spread Buddhism in different places. Distinctive Buddhist architectural structures and sculptures such as Stupas, Pagodas, monasteries and Caves, which have been mere spectators of different eras quietly speaks about the phases of the Buddhist stages.

Buddhism has a history dating back around 2,500 years old. The religion (or a way of life indeed) was established, spread across and got millions of adherents around the world. Having its foundation in India, Buddhism reached countries like China, Tibet, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Japan, Korea, Burma, Ceylon, Combodia etc. However, due to some historical reasons, the system of belief went through a phase of decline but again in the 20th century, it began to rose. Today, Buddhism has its followers all across the globe. It's not because Buddhism is a religion or a faith, but because it is a philosophy, a way of life.

The Indian architectural brilliance and the worthy efforts of the master craftsmen of the bygone eras can never be complete without the excellent pieces of Buddhist architecture.

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Indians, that are and eclectic mix of cultures and traditions, are known for the harmonious combination they share among themselves. Tourists and devotees from far and wide pour into the country to visit the Buddhist sites and experience the architecture that represents Buddhism.

Buddhist religious architecture developed in South Asia in the 3rd century BC.Three types of structures are associated with the religious architecture of early Buddhism: monasteries (viharas), stupas, and temples (Chaitya grihas).

Viharas initially were only temporary shelters used by wandering monks during the rainy season, but later were developed to accommodate the growing and increasingly formalised Buddhist monasticism. An existing example is at Nalanda (Bihar). A distinctive type of fortress architecture found in the former and present Buddhist kingdoms of the Himalayas are dzongs.

The initial function of a stupa was the veneration and safe-guarding of the relics of the Buddha. The earliest surviving example of a stupa is in Sanchi (Madhya Pradesh).

In accordance with changes in religious practice, stupas were gradually incorporated into chaitya-grihas (temple halls). These reached their high point in the 1st century BC, exemplified by the cave complexes of Ajanta and Ellora (Maharashtra). The Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya in Bihar is another well known example.

The Pagoda is an evolution of the Indian stupa.

Buddhist architecture emerged slowly in the period following the Buddha's life, building on Brahmanist Vedic models, but incorporating specifically Buddhist symbols.

Brahmanist temples at this time followed a simple plan - a square inner space, the sacrificial arena, often with a surrounding ambulatory route separated by lines of columns, with a conical or rectangular sloping roof, behind a porch or entrance area, generally framed by freestanding columns or a colonnade. The external profile represents Mount Meru, the abode of the gods and centre of the universe. The dimensions and proportions were dictated by sacred mathematical formulae. This simple plan was adopted by early Buddhists, sometimes adapted with additional

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cells for monks at the periphery (especially in the early cave temples such as at Ajanta, India).

In essence the basic plan survives to this day in Buddhist temples throughout the world. The profile became elaborated and the characteristic mountain shape seen today in many Hindu temples was used in early Buddhist sites and continued in similar fashion in some cultures (such as the Khmer). In others, such as Japan and Thailand, local influences and differing religious practices led to different architecture.

Early temples were often timber, and little trace remains, although stone was increasingly used. Cave temples such as those at Ajanta have survived better and preserve the plan form, porch and interior arrangements from this early period. As the functions of the monastery-temple expanded, the plan form started to diverge from the Brahmanist tradition and became more elaborate, providing sleeping, eating and study accommodation.

A characteristic new development at religious sites was the stupa. Stupas were originally more sculpture than building, essentially markers of some holy site or commemorating a holy man who lived there. Later forms are more elaborate and also in many cases refer back to the Mount Meru model.

One of the earliest Buddhist sites still in existence is at Sanchi, India, and this is centred on a stupa said to have been built by King Ashoka (273-236 BCE). The original simple structure is encased in a later, more decorative one, and over two centuries the whole site was elaborated upon. The four cardinal points are marked by elaborate stone gateways.

As with Buddhist art, architecture followed the spread of Buddhism throughout south and east Asia and it was the early Indian models that served as a first reference point, even though Buddhism virtually disappeared from India itself in the 10th century.

Decoration of Buddhist sites became steadily more elaborate through the last two centuries BCE, with the introduction of tablets and friezes, including human figures, particularly on stupas. However, the Buddha was not represented in human form until the 1st century CE. Instead, aniconic symbols were used. This is treated in more detail in

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Buddhist art, Aniconic phase. It influenced the development of temples, which eventually became a backdrop for Buddha images in most cases.

As Buddhism spread, Buddhist architecture diverged in style, reflecting the similar trends in Buddhist art. Building form was also influenced to some extent by the different forms of Buddhism in the northern countries, practicing Mahayana Buddhism in the main and in the south where Theravada Buddhism prevailed.

Caves

Caves or grottoes are the oldest form of the Buddhist architecture. They are also known as the rock-cut monasteries, which were hewn from the cliffs and rock walls of the valleys. The Buddhist caves traces back their beginning around 100 BCE. In India, the most significant cave is Ajanta caves, near modern Aurangabad, Maharashtra. The Indian Buddhist monks carried this art of cave hewing to China, where the earliest cave temples were built in the 4th century in Dunhuang or Tun-Huang, which were further decorated with relief carvings, paintings and stone images of the Buddha or the Bodhisattvas.

Stupas

The Stupas holds the most important place among all the earliest Buddhist sculptures. A Stupa is a dome-shaped monument, used to house Buddhists' relics or to commemorate significant facts of Buddhism. Though the Stupas are the most prominent sculptures throughout the world, but Myanmar or Burma is credited to have more Stupas than anywhere else. In India, the most important and well preserved site is at Sanchi, where one can find the full range of Buddhist art and architecture from the 3rd century BCE to the 12th century CE.

Pagodas

Pagodas are the principle form of Buddhist architecture, which are used as religious multistory Buddhist towers, erected as a memorial or shrine. They are symbols of five elements of the universe - earth, water, fire, air and ether,

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and along with them, the most important factor - Consciousness, which is the ultimate reality.

The early Buddhists had started using the royal symbol of 'Pagoda', by applying an umbrella-like structure to symbolise the Buddha, which soon took over the functions of the Stupas. In the 3rd century BCE, an Indian emperor Ashoka, who had converted to Buddhism, promoted the Pagodas by building 84,000 of them throughout India, and since then, Pagodas have been an inseparable parts of all those countries, which practice Buddhism : China, Japan, Korea, India and Southeast Asia. Myanmar houses the Mahamuni Pagoda, one of the most important pagodas in Mandalay, which has an ancient statue of the Buddha, brought there by king Bodawpaya in 1784 CE.

The Indian Pagodas, full of carvings and sculptures, are mainly pyramidical in shape and taper to apex, whereas those of China and other Asian regions are stereotypical pagodas with tiled and upward curving roofs.

Temples And Monasteries

The Buddhist temples and monasteries, found in every Buddhist country, form another distinctive example of the Buddhist architecture. The Buddhist temples in India are superb examples of the temple architecture with the most prominent one at Bodh Gaya (Mahabodhi temple), the place of the Buddha's enlightenment. Other major Buddhist temples in India, which are fine examples of the golden Indian architecture, are at Sanchi (450 CE), Taxila and Sarnath. Similarly, other temples such as those at Cambodia (the famous Angkor Wat temple), Sri Lanka, Thailand, China and Japan presents an excellent example of the Buddhist architecture. Japan boasts of being the greatest surviving concentration of the Buddhist art and architecture in its 80,000 temples, most of which retain original features from as early as the Nara period(710 CE - 794 CE).

Secondly, monasteries, a dwelling place for community of monks, presents fine example of the Buddhist architecture and charismatic Buddhist spirituality. In India, the ruins of the

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Nalanda monastic university and the ancient monasteries at Sarnath, whose ruins are still present along with some of the latest ones, still depicts the golden past of Buddhism and developed architectural style in India. The Tibetan, Japanese and Chinese monasteries along with others presents a very distinctive style of architecture with splendid use of colour and ornamentation. The use of images, paintings, thangkas and mandalas in these monasteries produces rich iconography not only architecturally, but artistically as well.

Early Development

Gupta period temple at Sanchi besides the Apsidal hall with Mauryafoundation

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BHAJA CAVES

Bhaja Caves are a group of 22 rock-cut caves dating back to 200 BC located at Karli, near Lonavala, Maharashtra. The location of Bhaja caves is not far from location of Karla Caves

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and these are stylistically similar to the Karla Caves. These caves are on a major trade route of the past that ran from the Arabian Sea eastward into the Deccan region, the division between North India and South India..

Architecture

The Bhaja caves share the same set of architectural designs as Karla caves. Visually most impressive monument is large shrine - chaityagriha - with open, horseshoe-arched entrance part. The chaitrya has unique reliefs of Indian mythology. Other caves have a nave and aisle, with an apse containing a solid stupa and the aisle circling round the apse, providing the circumambulation path.

Notable part of monument is a group of 14 stupas, five inside and nine outside an irregular excavation. One of the caves has some fine sculptures.Near the last cave is a waterfall which, during the monsoon season, has water that falls into a small pool at the bottom.

Karla Caves

Karla Caves is a complex of ancient Buddhist Indian rock-cut architecture cave shrines developed over two periods - from 2nd century B.C to 2nd century C.E. and in 5th - 10th century. Even though the caves were constructed over a period of time and the oldest one is believed to date back to 160 BC.

Located in Karli near Lonavala, Maharashtra, the caves are on a major ancient trade route, running eastward from the Arabian Sea into the Deccan. Karli's location in Maharashtra places it in a region that is the division between North India and South India.

Buddhism, having become identified with commerce and manufacturing through their early association with traders, tended to locate their monastic establishes in natural areas close to major trade routes so as to provide lodging houses for travelling traders.

Affiliation

The Karla caves were associated with the Mahasanghika sect of Buddhism, which had great popularity in this region of India, as well as wealthy patronage.

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Architecture

This complex of well-preserved Buddhist caves is built on the difficult terrain of a rocky hillside. The complex also happens to be one of the finest examples of the ancient rock-cut caves found in India. The large Karla caves were excavated by hewing out the rock. Great windows light the interiors.

The main cave has a magnificent Chaitya with huge pillars and intricately carved relief's dating back to the 1st century B.C. There are well carved sculptures of both males and females (see picture), as well as animals, including lions and elephants (see picture), a testimony to the skill of the artisan builders. Within the complex are a great many other magnificently carved prayer halls or chaityas as well as viharas or dwelling places for the monks.

A feature of these caves is their arched entrances and vaulted interiors. The outside facade has intricate details carved to imitate finished wood. The central motif is a large horseshoe arch. There is a lion column in front, with a closed stone facade and torana in between. During this period it is likely that thousands of caves like Karla were excavated in the Sahyadri Hills.

Undavalli Caves

The Undavalli Caves, an example of Indian rock-cut architecture, are located in the village of Undavalli in Tadepalli Mandal in Guntur District, near the southern bank of Krishna river, in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India. The caves are located 6 km south west from Vijayawada, 22 km north west of Guntur City and about 280 km from Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

These caves have been carved out of solid sandsone on a hillside in the 4th to 5th centuries A.D. There are several caves. The best known and largest one has four stories with a huge statue of Lord Vishnu in a reclining posture sculpted from a single block of granite inside the second floor. Other shrines inside the cave are dedicated to Trimurti: to Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

Main cave belongs to the earliest examples of Gupta architecture, primarily primitive rock-cut monastery cells

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carved into the sandstone hills. Initially caves were shaped as a Buddhist monastery and the first floor still retains style of Buddhist vihara, including some Buddhist sculptures.

The walls of the caves display sculptures carved by skilled craftsmen.

Undavalli caves are associated with the Vishnukundina kings of 420 to 620 A.D. They are dedicated to Anantapadmanabha Swamy and Narisimha Swamy. Caves are surrounded by the green countryside. From the high hill above the cave overlooking the Krishna river many fine specimens of rock cut Hindu architecture can be seen.

Bedse Caves

Bedse Caves also known as Bedsa Caves are situated in Maval taluka, Pune District, Maharashtra, India. The history of caves can be traced back up to 1st century B.C. There are two main caves. The best known cave is the chaitya (prayer hall) with comparatively large stupa, the other cave is monastery - vihara.

Both the caves contain some carvings although are less ornate than later caves. Both caves are facing eastwards so it is recommended to visit the caves early morning, as in sunlight the beauty of carvings is enhanced.

Until around 1861 the caves were regularly maintained - even painted. These works were ordered by local authorities in order to please British officers who often visited caves. This has caused loss of the remnants of plaster with murals on it.

Bedse Caves are comparatively less known and less visited. People know about the nearby Karla Caves and Bhaja Caves but have hardly heard of Bedse Caves. The trilogy of the caves (Karla - Bhaje - Bedse) in Mawal Region can't be completed without Bedse. An easy hike through steps leads to the caves. Also close to the Bedse caves are the famous foursome of Lohagad, Visapur, Tung and Tikona forts adjoining the Pawana Dam. Bedse Caves can be reached from Pune via Kamshet. They can also be reached via Paud - Tikona Peth - Pawananagar. Alternate route is from Somatne-Phata on the Pune-Mumbai NH4 Highway.

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Kanheri Caves

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These caves date from 1st century BCE to 10th century CE. In total in the basalt there have been carved 109 caves. Unlike the elegant splendor of Elephanta Caves nearby, the earlier cells are spartan and unadorned. Each cave has a stone plinth for a bed. A congregation hall with huge stone pillars contains the stupa, a Buddhist shrine.

Farther up the hill are the remains of an ancient water system, canals and cisterns that collected and channeled the rainwater into huge tanks. Once the caves became permanent monasteries, they began to be carved out of the rock with intricate reliefs of Buddha and the Bodhisattvas carved into the walls. Kanheri had become an important Buddhist settlement on the Konkan coast by the 3rd century A.D.

Most of the caves are the Buddhist viharas meant for living, study, and meditation. The larger caves were chaityas, or halls for congregational worship, are lined with intricately carved Buddhist sculptures, reliefs and pillars, and contain rock-cut stupas for congregational worship. The Avalokiteshwara is the most distinctive figure.

The large number of viharas obviously prove a well-organized existence of Buddhist monks' establishment, which was also connected with many trade centers such as the ports of Sopara, Kalyan, Nasik, Paithan and Ujjain. Kanheri was a University center by the time the area was under the rule of the Maurayan and Kushan empires. In the late 10th century, the Buddhist teacher Atisha (980-1054) came to the Krishnagiri Vihara to study Buddhist meditation under Rahulagupta.

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Around the Caves

Kanheri caves offer picnickers a good getaway, especially during the rainy season. The hilly terrain of the caves creates several large and small waterfalls. The road from the entry point of Sanjay Gandhi National Park to Kanheri caves is intercepted at several locations by small rivulets where families can enjoy a lazy weekend get-together.

Early Caves

The earliest caves employed by humans were natural caves used by local inhabitant for a variety of purposes such as shrines and shelters. The early caves included overhanging rock decorated with rock-cut art and the use of natural caves during the Mesolithic period (6000 BC).

Their use has continued in some areas into historic times. The Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka, a World Heritage Site, are on the edge of the Deccan Plateau where deep erosion has left huge sandstone outcrops. The many caves and grottos found there contain primitive tools and decorative rock paintings that reflect the ancient tradition of human interaction with their landscape, an interaction that continues to this day.

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Cave Temples

When Buddhist missionaries arrived they naturally gravitated to caves for use as cave temples and abodes, in accord with their religious ideas of asceticism and the monastic life. The Western Ghats topography with its flat-topped basalt hills, deep ravines and sharp cliffs, was suited to their natural inclinations.

The earliest of the Kanheri Caves were excavated in the 1rst and 2nd centuries B.C. as were those at Ajanta which were occupied continuously by Buddhist monks from 200 BCE to 650 AD. The Buddhist ideology encouraged identification with trade, monasteries became stopovers for inland traders and provided lodging houses that were usually located near trade routes.

As their mercantile and royal endowments grew, cave interiors became more elaborate with interior walls decorated with paintings and reliefs and intricate carvings. Facades were added to the exteriors as the interiors became designated for specific uses as monasteries (viharas) and worship halls (chaityas). Over the centuries simple caves began to resemble three-dimensional buildings, needing to be formally designed and requiring highly skilled artisans and craftsmen to complete. Theses artisans had not forgotten their timber roots and imitated the nuances of a wooden structure and the wood grain in working with stone.

Early examples of rock cut architecture are the Buddhist and Jain cave basadi, temples and monasteries, many with chandrashalas. The aesthetic nature of these religions inclined their followers to live in natural caves and grottos in the hillsides, away from the cities, and these became enhanced and embellished over time. Although many temples, monasteries and stupas had been destroyed, by contrast cave temples are very well preserved as they are both less visible and therefore less vulnerable to vandalism as well as made of more durable material than wood and masonry.

There are around 1200 cave temples still in existence, most of which are Buddhist. The residences of monks were called Viharas and the cave shrines, called Chaityas, were for

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The Ajanta Caves in Maharashtra, a World Heritage Site, are 30 rock-cut cave Buddhist temples carved into the sheer vertical side of a gorge near a waterfall-fed pool located in the hills of the Sahyadri mountains. Like all the locations of Buddhist caves, this one is located near main trade routes and spans six centuries beginning in the 2nd or 1st century B.C.

A period of intense building activity at this site occurred under the Vakataka king Harisena between 460 and 478 A profuse variety of decorative sculpture, intricately carved columns and carved reliefs are found, including exquisitely carved cornices and pilaster. Skilled artisans crafted living rock to imitate timbered wood (such as lintels) in construction and grain and intricate decorative carving, although such architectural elements were ornamental and not functional in the classical sense.

Another example of cave temple architecture are the Badami Cave Temples at Badami, the early Chalukya capital, carved out in the 6th century. There are four cave temples hewn from the sides of cliffs, three Hindu and one Jain, that contain carved architectural elements such as decorative pillars and brackets as well as finely carved sculpture and richly etched ceiling panels. Nearby are many small Buddhist cave shrines.

Monolithic Rock-cut Temples

The Pallava architects started the carving of rock for the creation of a monolithic copies of structural temples. A feature of the rock-cut cave temple distribution until the time of the early Pallavas is that they did not move further south than Aragandanallur, with the solitary exception of Tiruchitrapalli on the south bank of the Kaveri River, the traditional southern boundary between north and south. Also, good granite exposures for rock-cut structures were generally not available south of the river.

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A rock cut temple is carved from a large rock and excavated and cut to imitate a wooden or masonry temple with wall decorations and works of art. Pancha Rathas is an example of monolith Indian rock cut architecture dating from the late 7th century located at Mamallapuram,a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

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There are 34 caves built at this site, but the other 33 caves, Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain, were carved into the side of the plateau rock. The effect of the Kailash Temple is that of a free-standing temple surrounded by smaller cave shrines carved out of the same black rock. The Kailash Temple is carved with figures of gods and goddesses from the Hindu Puranas, along with mystical beings like the heavenly nymphs and musicians and figures of good fortune and fertility. Ellora Caves is also a World Heritage Site.

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There is no time line that divides the creation of rock-cut temples and free-standing temples built with cut stone as they developed in parallel. The building of free-standing structures began in 5th century, while rock cut temples continued to be excavated until the 12th century. An example of a free-standing structural temple is the Shore Temple, with its slender tower, built on the shore of the Bay of Bengal with finely carved granite rocks cut like bricks and dating from the 8th century. It is considered to be part of Group of Monuments at the Mahabalipuram UNESCO World Heritage Site

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Buddhist art originated in the Indian subcontinent in the centuries following the life of the historical Gautama Buddha in the 6th to 5th century BCE, before evolving through its contact with other cultures and its diffusion through the rest of Asia and the world. A first, essentially Indian, aniconic phase (avoiding direct representations of the Buddha), was followed from around the 1st century CE by an iconic phase (with direct representations of the Buddha).

For over twenty-five centuries, Buddhist ideas and ideals have guided and influenced the lives and thoughts of countless human beings in many parts of the world. As lay Buddhists, our own experiences and discoveries in life are not enough to give a true perspective on life. To bring ourselves closer to the ideal of a well-balanced man or woman, we need to

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acquire, at least in outline, what is called a cultural grounding in the Buddha-Dhamma.

Culture reveals to ourselves and others what we are. It gives expression to our nature in our manner of living and of thinking, in art, religion, ethical aspirations, and knowledge. Broadly speaking, it represents our ends in contrast to means.

A cultured man has grown, for culture comes from a word meaning "to grow." In Buddhism the arahant is the perfect embodiment of culture. He has grown to the apex, to the highest possible limit, of human evolution. He has emptied himself of all selfishness - all greed, hatred, and delusion - and embodies flawless purity and selfless compassionate service. Things of the world do not tempt him, for he is free from the bondage of selfishness and passions. He makes no compromises for the sake of power, individual or collective.

In this world some are born great while others have greatness thrust on them. But in the Buddha-Dhamma one becomes great only to the extent that one has progressed in ethical discipline and mental culture, and thereby freed the mind of self and all that it implies. True greatness, then, is proportional to one's success in unfolding the perfection dormant in human nature.

We should therefore think of culture in this way: Beginning with the regular observance of the Five Precepts, positively and negatively, we gradually reduce our greed and hatred. Simultaneously, we develop good habits of kindness and compassion, honesty and truthfulness, chastity and heedfulness. Steady, wholesome habits are the basis of good character, without which no culture is possible. Then, little by little, we become great and cultured Buddhists. Such a person is rightly trained in body, speech, and mind - a disciplined, well-bred, refined, humane human being, able to live in peace and harmony with himself and others. And this indeed is Dhamma.

In order to grow we also have to be active and energetic, diligent in wholesome conduct. There is no place for laziness and lethargy in Buddhism. We must be diligent in cultivating all aspects of the Dhamma in ourselves at all times. If we develop as good individuals, we automatically become

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cultured members of our society, mindful both of rights and duties. Buddhism addresses itself only to the individual thinking person. It has nothing to do with mass movements, for "masses" are just collections of individual men and women. Any true social development must therefore begin with the transformation of each individual person.

In this way the ethical dilemmas of an economically developing country like Sri Lanka, with a background of Buddhist culture, are resolved, for a true lay Buddhist will aim at personal progress in worldly matters only on the foundation of the Noble Eightfold Path. Progress by way of adhamma - unrighteousness - well inevitably bring in its trail disaster, pain, and suffering to individual, community, and nation.

Such a misguided policy implies disbelief in kamma and its effects. Reject kamma and one is rootless. Rejection is the result of blinding greed for quick material gain and sensual pleasures, conjoined with delusion about the true nature and destiny of man and life. It also signifies acceptance of the philosophy of expediency - that one should "get the most that one can" out of this single fleeting life on earth guided largely by one's instincts, subject to the laws of society, which the affluent and powerful often circumvent with impunity. Such a short-sighted and mistaken view ultimately leads to individual and social tensions, to restlessness and conflict, and to the spread of indiscipline, lawlessness, and crime.

Buddhism distinguishes between emotions that are constructive, such as metta and karuna, and those that are destructive: anger and jealousy, for instance. It encourages the cultivation of the former to eliminate the latter. Human beings can both think and feel. When the Buddha taught the Dhamma, sometimes he appealed to reason, sometimes to the emotions, and sometimes to the imagination, using such means of instruction as fables, stories, and poetry. Buddhist culture, too, manifests in other forms than that of a fine character, such as in the field of literature - the Jatakas, the Theragatha and Therigatha, for examples - philosophy, art, architecture, and sculpture.

Art is basically a medium of human communication. It can help in the education of the emotions and is one of the civilizing

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agencies of humankind. The work of the artist, whether painter, dramatist, sculptor, or writer, is worthy of study because it has a certain expressiveness that both reveals and stimulates fresh insights. The artist sees new meanings in objects and experience that ordinarily escape the rest of us, and thus he creates new values and insights in life.

Rightly viewed as the expression of the good life, and as an aid to living it - and not for mere enjoyment and appreciation - art can therefore ennoble us. For example, the tranquillity and peace that one sees in the Samadhi statue of the Buddha elevates the mind, stimulates confidence, and induces reverence for the Dhamma. In all Buddhist lands, the images of the Buddha and the Bodhisatta have become the typical form of artistic expression.

Buddhist culture is perennial and so is as fresh today as it was in the Buddha's time 2500 years ago. It is also self-sufficient, self-consistent, and self-sustaining. Based as it is on eternal verities, verifiable by individual experience, it is never obsolete, and animates the progress that seems to kill it. Nor does its content change with context.

The impact of Buddhism on world culture was truly significant. In it, there is no intellectual error, based as it is on reason and on the bedrock of personal experience. It is free from moral blindness, for its ethics is truly lofty, guided by a rational basis for such an ethic, namely, personal evolution in terms of one's own kamma. It engendered no social perversity - hate and intolerance were for none, limitless loving-kindness and compassion were for all. The doors to deliverance were open to anyone who wished to enter them. Its thrilling message of reason, universal benevolence, flaming righteousness, social justice, hope, and deliverance in this very existence by one's own exertion - all had a fertilizing and liberating influence on thought and action wherever Buddhism spread.

To the thinking person, Buddhism offered a rational, practical, and balanced way of deliverance from all life's sorrows, and the certainty of the perfectibility of man, here and now solely by one's own effort. To the humanist it gave an all-embracing compassionate vision, inspiring a meliorative

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action as a pre-condition for the realization of the highest spiritual attainments.

Even to have a general idea of its achievements, in the manifold ways it has expressed itself in society, is an education in the art of living. Buddhism gives perspective to the whole of life. Nothing in life is seen as more important than it really is. A cultured Buddhist can tell the good from the bad, the right from the wrong, the true from the false. He can weigh the evidence skillfully, and his Buddhist cultural background makes his judgment a wise one.

From that time, Buddhist art diversified and evolved as it adapted to the new countries where the faith was expanding. It developed to the north through Central Asia and into Eastern Asia to form the Northern branch of Buddhist art, and to the east as far as Southeast Asia to form the Southern branch of Buddhist art. In India, Buddhist art flourished and even influenced the development of Hindu art, until Buddhism almost disappeared around the 10th century with the expansion of Hinduism and Islam.

Ethics in Buddhism are traditionally based on what Buddhists view as the enlightened perspective of the Buddha, or other enlightened beings who followed him. Moral instructions are included in Buddhist scriptures or handed down through tradition. Most scholars of Buddhist ethics thus rely on the examination of Buddhist scriptures, and the use of anthropological evidence from traditional Buddhist societies, to justify claims about the nature of Buddhist ethics.

According to traditional Buddhism, the foundation of Buddhist ethics for laypeople is the Pancasila: no killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, or intoxicants. In becoming a Buddhist, or affirming one's commitment to Buddhism, a layperson is encouraged to vow to abstain from these negative actions. The precepts are not formulated as imperatives, but as training rules that laypeople undertake voluntarily to facilitate practice.

In Buddhist thought, the cultivation of dana and ethical conduct will themselves refine consciousness to such a level that rebirth in one of the lower heavens is likely, even if there is no

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further Buddhist practice. There is nothing improper or un-Buddhist about limiting one's aims to this level of attainment. Buddhist monks and nuns take hundreds more such vows.

The Buddha provided some basic guidelines for acceptable behavior that are part of the Eightfold path. The initial precept is non-injury or non-violence to all living creatures from the lowest insect to humans. This precept defines a non-violent attitude toward every living thing. The Buddhist practice of this does not extend to the extremes exhibited by Jainism, but from both the Buddhist and Jain perspectives, non-violence suggests an intimate involvement with, and relationship to, all living things.

CAVE TEMPLES

When Buddhist missionaries arrived they naturally gravitated to caves for use as cave temples and abodes, in accord with their religious ideas of asceticism and the monastic life. The Western Ghats topography with its flat-topped basalt hills, deep ravines and sharp cliffs, was suited to their natural inclinations. The earliest of the Kanheri Caves were excavated in the 1rst and 2nd centuries B.C. as were those at Ajanta which were occupied continuously by Buddhist monks from 200 BCE to 650 AD.

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THAI TEMPLE ART AND ARCHITECTURE

The architecture of a Wat has seen many changes in Thailand in the course of history. Although there are many differences in lay-out and style, they all adhere to the same principals.

A Thai temple, with few exceptions, consists of two parts: The Phuttha-wat and the Sangha-wat.

Phutthawat

The Phutthawat is the area which is dedicated to Buddha. It generally contains several buildings:

- Chedi - also known as a stupa it is mostly seen in the form of a bell-shaped tower, often accessible and covered with gold leaf, containing a relic chamber.
- Prang - the Thai version of Khmer temple towers, mostly seen in temples from the Sukhothai and the Ayutthaya period.
- Ubosot or Bot - the Ordination Hall and most sacred area of a Wat. Eight Sema stones mark the consecrated area.
- Wihan - in Thai temples this designates a shrine hall that contains the principal Buddha images; it is the assembly hall where monks and believers congregate.
- Mondop - A Mondop is a specific square or cruciform based building or shrine,sometimes with a spired roof within a Thai Buddhist temple or temple complex. It is a ceremonial structural form that can be applied to several different kinds of buildings. It can house relics, sacred scriptures or

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act as a shrine. Unlike the mandapa of Khmer or Indian temple, which are part of a larger structure, the Thai mondop is a free -standing unit.

- Ho trai - the Temple Library or Scriptures Depository houses the sacred Tipitaka scriptures. Sometimes they are built in the form of a Mondop, a cubical-shaped building where the pyramidal roof is carried by columns.
- Sala - an open pavilion providing shade and a place to rest.
- Sala kan prian - a large, open hall where lay people can hear sermons or receive religious education. It literally means "Hall, in which monks study for their Prian exam" and is used for saying afternoon prayers.
- Ho rakang - the bell tower is used for waking the monks and to announce the morning and evening ceremonies.
- Phra rabieng - a peristyle is sometimes built around the sacred inner area as a cloister.
- Additional buildings can also be found inside the Phuttawat area, depending on local needs, such as a crematorium or a school.

The buildings are often adorned with elements such as chofahs. In temples of the Rattanakosin era, such as Wat Pho and Wat Ratchabopit, the ubosot can be contained within a (low) inner wall called a Kamphaeng Kaew, which translated to 'Crystal Wall'.

Sanghawat

The Sanghawat contains the living quarters of the monks. It also lies within the wall surrounding the whole temple compound. The sanghawat area can have the following buildings:

- Kuti - originally a small structure, built on stilts, designed to house a monk, with its proper size defined in the Sanghathisep, Rule 6, to be 12 by 7 Keub (4.013 by 2.343 meters). Modern kutis take on the shape of an apartment building with small rooms for the monks.
- The sanghawat can also contain the 'Ho rakang' (bell tower) and even the 'Sala Kan Prian' (sermon hall).

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- It will house most of the functional buildings such as a kitchen building where food can be prepared by lay people, and sanitary buildings.

TEMPLE ELEMENTS

Roof Forms

Multiple roof tiers are important element of the Thai temple. The use of ornamented multiple tiers is reserved for roofs on temples, palaces and important public buildings. Two or three tiers are most often used, but some royal temples have four. The use of multiple roof tiers is more aesthetic than fuctional. Because temple halls are large,their roof areas are massive. To lighten up the roof's appearance, the lowest tier is the largest, with a smaller middle layer and the smallest roof on top.

Multiple breaks in each roof lighten it further - a double-tiered roof might have 2-4 breaks in each tier. Dynamic visual rhythms are created by these multiple tiers, breaks and tier patterns. In northern temples, the roof area is larger, sweeping low towards the ground to cover more of the wall. The lower tiers telescope farther to the entrance. In central Thai temple, the lower tiers telescope just a short distance beyond the top roof at the gable ends.

Roof Finials

Most decorations are attached to the bargeboard, the long,thin panel on the edge of the roof at the gable ends. The decorative structure is called the lamyong. The lamyong is sculpted in an undulating , serpentine nag sadung shape evoking the naga. Its blade-like projection called bai raka suggest both naga fins and the feathers of Garuda.

Its lower finial is called a hang hong , which usually takes the form of a naga's head turned up and facing away from the roof. The naga head may be styled in flame-like kranok motifs and may have multiple heads. A roof with multiple breaks or tiers has identical hang hong finials at the bottom of each section. Perched on the peak of the lamyong is the large curving ornament called a chofah, which resembles the beak of a bird, perhaps representing Garuda.

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Popular temple icons

During the 10th century, Thai Theravada Buddhism and Hindu cultures merged, and Hindu elements were introduced into Thai iconography. Popular figures include the four-armed figure of Vishnu; the garuda (half man, half bird); the eight-armed Shiva; elephant-headed Ganesh; the naga, which appears as a snake, dragon or cobra; and the ghost-banishing giant Yaksha.

STUPAS

Stupas were built of stones or bricks to commemorate important events or mark important places associated with Buddhism or to house important relics of Buddha. Ashok Maurya who laid the foundation of this group of monuments is said to have built 84,000 stupas, most of which have perished.

The best examples of stupas are those constructed at Amaravati, Sanchi, Barhut and Gaya. "One of the most striking architectural remains of ancient India" and the earliest and largest of the three stupas found in Sanchi was built by Ashoka (273-236 B.C.)

Sanchi in Raisen district of Madhya Pradesh is famous for its magnificent Buddhist monuments and edifices. Situated on a hill, these beautiful and well-preserved stupas depict the various stages of development of Buddhist art and architeeture over a period of thirteen hundred years from the third century B.C. to the twelfth century A.D. Inscriptions show that these monuments were maintained by the rich merchants of that region.

The stupa built by Ashoka was damaged during the break-up of the Maurya Empire. In the 2nd century B.C., during the rule of the Sungas it was completely reconstructed. Religious activity led to the improvement and enlargement of the stupa and a stone railing was built around it. It was also embellished with the construction of heavily carved gateways.

The Great stupa has a large hemispherical dome which is flat at the top, and crowned by a triple umbrella or Chattra on a pedestal surrounded by a square railing or Karmika. Buddha's relics were placed in a casket chamber in the centre

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of the Dome. At the base of the dome is a high circular terrace probably meant for parikrama or circumambulation and an encircling balustrade. At the ground level is a stone-paved procession path and another stone Balustrade and two flights of steps leading to the circular terrace. Access to it is through four exquisitely carved gateways or Toranas in the North, South, East and West. The diameter of the stupa is 36.60 metres and its height is 16.46 metres. It is built of large burnt bricks and mud mortar. It is presumed that the elaborately carved Toranas were built by ivory or metal workers in the 1st. Century BC during the reign of King Satakarni of the Satavahana Dynasty. The last addition to the stupa was made during the early 4th Century AD in the Gupta period when four images of Buddha sitting in the dhyana mudra or meditation were installed at the four entrances.

The first Torana gateway to be built is the one at the principal entrance on the South. Each gateway has two square pillars. Crowning each pillar on. all four sides are four elephants, four lions and four dwarfs. The four dwarfs support a superstructure of three architraves or carved panels one above the other. Between these are intricately carved elephants and riders on horseback. The lowest architrave is supported on exquisitely carved bracket figures. The panels are decorated with finely carved figures of men, women, yakshas, lions and elephants. The entire panel of the gateways is covered with sculptured scenes from the life of Buddha, the Jataka Tales, events of the Buddhist times and rows of floral or lotus motifs. The scenes from Buddha's life show Buddha represented by symbols - the lotus, wheel a riderless caparisoned horse, an umbrella held above a throne, foot prints and the triratnas which are symbolic of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. The top panel has a Dharma chakra with two Yakshas on either side holding chamaras. South of the Scenes depicted from Buddha's life are the Enlightenment of Buddha (a throne beneath a peepul tree); the First Sermon (a Dharma chakra placed on a throne); The Great Departure (a riderless horse and an empty chariot with an umbrella above); Sujata's offering and the temptation and assault by Mara.

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The big Stupa at Bharhut also in Madhya Pradesh was constructed in the 2nd century BC in the Sunga Period. It is a hemispherical dome built of brick and is surmounted by a shaft and an umbrella to represent the spiritual sovereignty of Buddhism. The railing surrounding it is of red sandstone. Scenes from the life of Buddha and the Jataka Tales are sculptured on the gateways, pillars, uprights and cross-bars of the railings.

During the same period, a number of stupas, chaityas, viharas and pillars were constructed in Sanchi, Bodh-Gaya, Mathura, Gandhara, Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda. Though most of these have not remained in their entirety, the ruins are of architectural interest.

The Stupas of Nagajunakonda and Amaravati, both in the Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh show that the Stupas of the Southern region differ in structure from those of the North. The architecture here is a shift from the usual Buddhist style, which reflected the two main divisions in Buddhism - Hinayana and Mahayana. Different trends and styles were incorporated here giving rise to new architectural forms, i.e. a quadrangular monastery, square and rectangular image shrine, pillared hall and a. small stupa on a square platform.

The stupas of Nagarjunakonda are in the form of a hemispherical dome resting on a low drum encased in panels sculptured with scenes of events depicting the life of Buddha. A notable feature of the stupas here is ayaka platforms in the four directions with five inscribed pillars on each of them. The five pillars symbolise the five important events in the life of Buddha - his Birth, Renunciation, Enlightenment, First Sermon and Parinirvana.

Some of the stupas are built on a square platform having an apsidal shrine on either side and a pillared hall within a quadrangular monastery. Some stupas were wheel-shaped having four to ten spokes and a two or three winged vihara.

The earliest of the Nagarjunkonda stupas is the Maha Chaitya which contains the tooth relic of Buddha. The stupa is wheel-shaped with ayaka platforms surmounted by pillars. The smallest stupa here has only two cells and the Chaitya griha enshrines the image of Buddha.

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Ruins of stupas have been found in Rajgriha or Rajgir (Bihar) where the First Buddhist Council was held; at Vaisali (Bihar) where the Second Buddhist Council was held and at Sravasti (U.P.) one of the eight places of Buddhist pilgrimage where Buddha is said to have performed the Great Miracle. To show his spiritual powers, he made a mango tree to sprout in a day and created numerous images of himself, sitting and standing on lotuses with fire and water emanating from his body. The conversion of King Prasenajit and the dacoit Angulimala is also said to have taken place here.

Ruins of the main stupa in Kusinagara in U.P. where Buddha passed away and was cremated, is believed to contain the bodily remains of Buddha. Both Fa-hien and Hiuen- Tsang have recorded their visits to these places.

The Dhamekh Stupa and the Dharmarajika stupa at Sarnath are believed to have been built by Ashoka and later rebuilt in the Gupta period. These stupas contain the relics of Buddha and are therefore important places of Buddhist pilgrimage. Buddha gave his First Sermon in Sarnath and also founded the Sangha or Order of Monks here. The original Dhamekh Stupa built with mud or brick is a cylindrical structure 43.5 m. high. The stone base-ment has eight projecting faces with niches in them. Delicately carved with beautiful floral and geo-metrical patterns, it is believed to have been put up in thc Gupta period.

VIHARAS

Viharas or monasteries constructed with brick or excavated from rocks are found in different parts of India. Usually built to a set plan, they have a hall meant for congregational prayer with a running verandah on three sides or an open courtyard surrounded by a row of cells and a pillared verandah in front. These cells served as dwelling places for the monks. These monastic buildings built of bricks were self-contained units and had a Chaitya hall or Chaitya mandir attached to a stupa - the chief object of worship.

Some of the important Buddhist viharas are those at Ajanta, Ellora. Nasik, Karle, Kanheri, Bagh and Badami. The Hinayana viharas found in these places have many interesting features

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which differentiate them from the Mahayana type in the same regions. Though plain from the point of view of architecture, they are large halls with cells excavated in the walls on three sides. The hall has one or more entrances. The small cells, each with a door have one or two stone platforms to serve as beds.

The excavations of viharas at Nagarjunakonda show large rectangular courtyards with stone-paved central halls. Around the courtyard, the row of -cells, small and big, suggest residences and dining halls for monks.

Twenty-five of the rock-cut caves of Ajanta are viharas and are the finest of monasteries. Four of the viharas belong to the 2nd century BC. Later, other caves were excavated during the reign of the Vakataka rulers who were the contemporaries of the Gupta Rulers. Some of the most beautiful viharas belong to this period. The finest of them. Cave 1, of the Mahayana type consists of a verandah, a hall, groups of cells and a sanctuary. It has a decorated facade. The portico is supported by exquisitely carved pillars. The columns have a square base with figures of dwarfs and elaborately carved brackets and capitals. Below the capital is a square abacus with finely carved makara motifs. The walls and the ceilings of the cave contain the most exquisite paintings.

The viharas of Ellora dated 400 AD to 7th century AD are of one, two, and three storeys and are the largest of the type. They contain sculptured figures and belong to both Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism.

CHAITYAS

Chaitya grihas or halls of worship were built all over the country either of brick or excavated from rocks. Ruins of a large number of structural Buddhist chaity grihas are found in the eastern districts of Andhra Pradesh, in valleys, near rivers and lakes. The ruins located in the districts of Srikakulam at Salihundam, of Visahkapatnam at Kotturu, of West Godavari at Guntapalli, of Krishna at Vijayawada, of Guntur at Nagajunakonda and Amaravati belong to the 3rd century BC and later. The largest brick chaitya hall was excavated at Guntapalli.

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Some of the most beautiful rock-cut caves are those at Ajanta, Ellora, Bhaja, Karle, Bagh, Nasik and Kanheri. Some of the chunar sand-stone rock--cut chaityas of Bhaja. Kondane. Karle and Ajanta, all in Maharashtra state are earlier excavations and belong to the first phase or Hinayana creed of Buddhism and are similar to the brick and wooden structures of Ashokan times. Some of the chaityas show that wood had been used in the roofing and entrance arches. The chaitya at Bhaja is a long hall 16.75 metres long and 8 metres broad with an apse at the end. The hall is divided into a central nave and an aisle on either side flanked by two rows of pillars. The roof is vaulted. The rock-cut stupa in the apse is crowned by a wooden harmika. The chaitya has a large arched torana or entrance with an arched portico.

Hinayana rock architecture reaches the peak of excellence in the splendid chaitya at Karle. An inscription in Karle mentions Bhutapala, a banker to be the founder of the chaitya hall but later scholars identify him with Devabhuti, the last of the Sunga rulers.

The chaitya has a double-storeyed facade and has three doorways in the lower part. It has an upper gallery over which there is the usual arch. The walls of the vestibule to the chaitya hall are decorated with sculptured figures of couples. The pillars separating the central nave from the aisles have a pot base, an octagonal shaft, inverted lotus capital with an abacus. The abacus has exquisitely carved pairs of elephants kneeling down, each with a couple in front and caparisoned horses with riders on them. The stupa at the apse end is tall and cylindrical with two tiers of railings around the drum. It is crowned by the original wooden chhatra. This is the most beautiful of the chaityas.

The second phase of Buddhist architecture is marked by the Mahayana creed of Buddhism seen in some of the excellent rock-cut chaityas at Ajanta in Aurangabad district of Maharashtra excavated between 5th AD and 9th century AD during the rule of the Vakatakas, the Guptas and the Rashtrakutas.

The caves were first discovered in the beginning of the 19th century. The caves are excavated from a semi-circular steep

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rock with a stream flowing below, and were meant for the use of the monks who spent the rainy season there in meditation.

The caves are at different levels and have stairs leading down to the stream. Five of the thirty caves arc chaityas or sanctuaries. The earlier group of two caved dated 2nd century BC belong to the style of Kondan and Nasik caves.

The chaityas have a vaulted ceiling with a huge horse-shoe shaped window or chaitya window over the doorway. They are large halls divided into three, parts - the central nave, apse and aisles on either side separated by a row of columns. The side aisles continue behind the apse for circumambulation. At the centre of the apse is a rock stupa with large figure of Buddha, sitting or standing. A remarkable feature of these Chaityas is the imitation of woodwork on rock. Beams and rafters were carved in the rock though they serve no purpose. From the unfinished caves, we get an idea of the method of excavation. Starting from the ceiling, they worked downwards. Solid blocks were left to be carved into pillars. After finishing the verandah, they excavated the interior. Tools used were the pick-axe, chisel and hammer.

The most perfect of this group of chaitya grihas is cave 19. Excavated at the end of the 5th century AD it is similar to the other chaityas in its plan and ribbed vaulted ceiling except for its single doorway and elaborate ornamentation. It has a pillared portico in front leading into a courtyard with the walls on either side heavily sculptured with figures. The interior pillars are well decorated with cushion shaped capitals. The corbel brackets are richly sculptured. The drum of the central stupa is elongated and carved. Projecting from the drum is an arched nasika or niche with the figure of a standing Buddha carved in it. The rounded dome of the stupa ~ is surmounted by a harmika and three tiers of chhatras, diminishing in size and supported by figures on four sides. On top of the chhatras and touching the ceiling is another small stupa with a miniature harmika. The facade of the cave is exqui-sitely carved. The chaitya-window has figures of yakshas and richly carved, friezes on either side. Two figures of standing Buddha flank the entrance. The walls of the hall and the ceiling of the aisles is richly painted with figures of Buddha, floral motifs, animals and birds.

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PAINTINGS

Paintings which has been an accepted art since early times attained heights of excellence in Gupta period. These exquisite paintings or frescos are to be seen in the caves of Ajanta. The entire surface of the caves is exquisitely painted and shows the high standard reached in mural painting.

The theme of the painting on the walls is mostly the life of Buddha and Bodhisattvas and the Jataka stories. These topics cover a continuous narration of events on all aspects of human-life from birth to death. Every kind of human emotion is depicted. The paintings reflect the contemporary life of the times, dress, ornaments, culture, weapons used, even their beliefs are portrayed with life-like reality. The paintings include gods, yakshas, kinneras, gandharvas, apsaras and human beings.

The paintings show their intense feeling for nature and an understanding of the various aspects of all living beings. The ceilings are covered with intricate designs, flowers, plants, birds, animals, fruit and people. The ground for painting was prepared by paving it with a rough layer of earth and sand mixed with vegetable fibres, husk and grass. A second coat of mud mixed with fine sand and fibrous vegetable material was applied. A final finish was given with a thin coat of lime-wash, glue was used as a binder. On this prepared surface, the outlines were drawn and the spaces were filled with the required colours; with much attention given to shades and tones. Red, yellow, black, ochre, blue and gypsum were mostly used.

Some of the renowned paintings are that of the Bodhisattva holding a lily (cave 1), the painting of Padmapani, the Apsaras with a turban headgear (cave 17) the painting on the ceiling (cave 2) and the toilet scheme (cave 17) considered to be a masterpiece of the painter.

STHAMBAS

Sthambas or Pillars with religious emblems were put up by pious Buddhists in honour of Buddha or other great Buddhists. Fragments of sthambas belonging to Mauryan times and later were found at Sanchi, Sarnath, Amaravati and Nagarjunkonda.

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A portion of the Ashoka Pillar, 15.25 metres high, surmounted by the famous lion-capital and a dharma chakra above the heads of the four lions stands embedded near the Dharmarajika stupa at Sarnath. The pillar bears the edict of Ashoka warning the monks and nuns against creating a schism in the monastic order. The broken fragments of the Pillar are now in the Museum at Sarnath. The lion-capital - the most magnificient piece of Mauryan sculpture is 2.31 metres high. It consists of four parts - (i) a bell-shaped vase covered with inverted lotus petals, (ii) a round abacus, (iii) four seated lions and (iv) a crowning dharmachakra with thirty two spokes. The four lions are beautifully sculptured. On the abacus are four running animals - an elephant, a bull, a horse and a. lion with a small dharmachakra between them. The dharmachakra symbolises the dharma or law; the four lions facing the four directions are the form of Buddha or Sakyasimha, the four galloping animals are the four quarters accord-ing to Buddhist books and the four smaller dharmachakras stand for the intermediate regions and the lotus is the symbol of creative activity. The surface of these pillars has a mirror like finish.

Another Ashokan Pillar of note is the one at Lauriya Nandangarh in Bihar. Erected in the 3rd century BC it is made of highly polished Chunar sand-stone. Standing 9.8 metres high it rises from the ground and has no base structure. It is surmounted by a bell-shaped inverted lotus. The abacus on it is decorated with flying geese and crowning it is a sitting lion. The pillar is an example of the engineering skill of the craftsmen of Mauryan times.

Gandhara Art

Buddhist art entered upon a new phase with the rise of Mahayana Buddhism during the 1 Century B.C. to 1 Century A.D. The period is remarkable in that it gave for the first time the figure art or the anthropomorplhic representations of the Buddha. Under the patronage of Kushana rulers (1-2 Century A.D.) a new school of art flourished in the Gandhara region, i.e. Peshawar and its neighbouring districts. Because of its strategic geographical position the region became a meeting

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place of various races and cultures. As a result of this, the art of the region shows mingling of both Indian and foreign ideas and motifs. Gandhara art is a hybrid product; though Buddhist in theme it is Graeco-Roman in style or technique as is evident from the physiognomy and drapery of the images. The artists of this region have produced a large number of Buddha and Bodhisattva images along with other Buddhist deities. Gandhara art flourished for about four to five hundred years and to a great extent it influenced the indigenous art of Mathura, Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda. It exercised a profound influence upon the art of Afgahnistan and Central Asia The Buddha and Bodhisattva images of many sites in Central Asia show an affiliations to the Gandhara style. The art of the region received a greatblow at the hands of the Huna invaders. Mihirakula, a cruel king of the Huna had destroyed, as Xuanzang was told during his travel to this country, the Buddhist monasteries of the region. The main centres of Gandhara art were the cities of Peshawar and Taxila, and also Afghanistan where a large number of stupas, monasteries and sculptures have been unearthed by the archaeologists.

Mathura – A great Centre of Art

Mathura also was a great centre of art and culture during this period. Here flourished side by side all the important religions of India, such as Brahmanism, Jainism and Buddhism. It is believed that the first Buddha images were carved at Mathura simultaneously if not earlier, with the Gandhara school. Mathura has produced Buddha images of various dimensions. The Kushana Buddha or Bodhisattva images of Mathura served as the prototypes of the more beautiful specimens of the Gupta period. The workshop of Mathura exported several Buddhist images to various other places, such as Sarnath and even as far as Rajgir in Bihar. It is well known that Friar-Bala an inhabitant of Mathura had several Bodhisattva images set up at different places. Two of them were found at Sravasti and Sarnath. (The Kushana art of Mathura is somewhat heavy. The style and technique which the Kushana artists were trying to evolve were brought to

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the Gupta period. But the art of South India during this time is more elegant and sophisticated. The sculptured panels of Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda, Goli, Ghantasals, belonging to the 2 – 3 Century A.D., are characterised by delicasy of forms, and linear grace.

THE GUPTA ART

The Gupta period (4 – 6 Century A.D.) marks the bright period of art in India. Gupta art is marked by restraint combined with a high aesthetic sense and discipline. The main centres of Buddhist art during this period were Mathura, Sarnath and Nalanda in the north. The Buddhist images of Mathura and Sarnath are some of the best specimens of Indian art, never equalled by any art creations of later period. The delicate folds of the transparent garment adorning the Gupta figures were done in a beautiful style. The profusely decorated halo is another special feature of the art of the Gupta figure. The delicate modelling of forms with meditative repose has rendered the Buddha and Bodhisattva figures of the Gupta period most attractive. The Gupta artists showed an equal ingenuity in the carving of metal images also. The bronze Buddha image from Sultanganj and also one from Dhanesar Khera together with a number of specimens found in north-western part of India are some excellent specimens testifying to the skill and ability of the Gupta metal carvers.

This period is also known for excavations of several rock-cut viharas and temples at Ajanta and Ellora, in Maharashtra, under the patronage of the Vakataka King. Caves 16,17 and 26 at Ajanta are excellent examples of pillared halls with usual cells with shrines in the back containing Budha figures. The beauty and variety of the pillars are remarkable. Caves 16 and 17 were excavated in the last quarter of the 5 Century A.D. by a Minister and feudatory of the Vakataka king Harisena. The mural paintings in the Ajanta caves of the Vakataka period contain representations of scenes from Buddha's life from the conception to enlightenment. Some of them are devoted to the illustrations of Jataka stories, including one of Prince Visvantara, hero of immeasurable bounty. The

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Ajanta paintings both in composition and technique are characterised by a delicacy and depth of feelings. The artists excel not only in depicting human and animal figures but also in decorative genius. They adorned the ceilings, pedestals of columns, door and window frames, with patterns and motifs of kaleidoscopic variety. Several Buddhist caves are to be found also at Bagh (Madhya Pradesh) and Ellora (Maharashtra), containing numerous Budha and Bodhisattva figures (5 – 6 Century).

POST – GUPTA – DEVELOPMENTS

The Gupta art tradition was followed in later period also. The art of Nalanda , Kurkihar, Sarnath, Orissa and other places during the mediaeval period is based upon the Gupta art idiom. The north Indian Buddhism of the mediaeval period (8 – 11 Century A.D). is a peculiar synthesis of the Mahayana ideals and tantric elements. The concept of the Adi-Budha, the Dhyani-Buddhas, the divine Bodhisattvas as well as the concept of Shakti or the female energy figures most prominently in the Buddhist art of the period. One anachronism of Buddhist art in mediaeval period is the introduction of the crowned Buddhas with jewelleries. Though incompatible to the idea of renunciation which Buddha followed and preached, such images were made probably to lay emphasis on the concept of Buddha as a Chakravartin, the supreme universal monarch.

Nalanda

The art of Nalanda shows very high standard of stone carving as well as metal casting. The minute execution of the bronzes specially of the smaller ones, has excited the admiration of all art lovers of the world. Several Nalanda bronzes were exported to Nepal and Tibet and also to Java. Equally interesting are the palm leaf illustrations of the Buddhist manuscripts of the Pala period. Their minature size, colour scheme and linear grace show the skill of the painters of these illustrations. The Pala style of painting, as Pala sculptures and bronzes, very much influenced the art of Nepal, Tibet and the

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further East. Bodh-Gaya and Nalanda in Magadha drew pilgrims from different parts of the Buddhist world.

Nagapattinam

A flourishing centre of Buddhism in South India during the period was Naga-pattinam, near Madras on east coast. There existed here in the mediaeval period a colony of the Malaya Buddhists who, patronized by the Cholas erected here two temples in the 11 Century A.D., with the aid granted by the Sailendra kings of Java and Sumatra. One of the temples was called Rajarajaperumpalli and the Rajendra cholaperumpalli. Naga-pattinum was a place of piligrimage for the Buddhists of different places in India as well as outside. Since 1856 about 350 bronzes have been found in these vihara sites. Some of them are of the early Chola times while the rest belong to the later Chola period. The Nagapattinam bronzes are some of the finest metal works of South India.

Temple of Borobodur

The perfect proportions of a Buddha, the graciousness of his physical form, represent one of the ten qualities or powers of a Buddha. They are the characteristics of the physical harmony and beauty of a Great Being, and are described in Story of the Life of Buddha Shakyamuni. There are thirty-two major and eighty minor characteristics. The lines of the eight-spoked on the soles and palms of a Buddha are among them. The appearance and the measurements of a Buddha are perishable and a worldly conception: they describe the ideal picture of a Heavenly Body. They are not subject to change like growth, sickness and death, which can only affect the earthly incarnation of a Buddha.

Examining the canon of the body of a Buddha, one realises that every detail represents harmonious proportions. Everything, the spot between the eyebrows, marking the eye of wisdom, as well as the tip of the nose, has its own special place. The nose has its specific length, just as the ears have their own characteristically exaggerated length. The symbol of a Buddha's greatest enlightenment is the so-called

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enlightenment-elevation on the top of the head, described in old texts as that which emerges out of the head of an enlightened saint. It is the visible symbol of the spiritual generative power that strives towards heaven and passes into the immaterial sphere.

The ideal proportions of any image of the Buddha are described in books on iconography. The canonic prototype shows the seated Buddha with his legs crossed and the soles of his feet visible. This yoga-posture has a pre-Buddhist tradition in India, appearing for the first time on the seals of Mohenjodaro in the third millennium BC. This yoga-posture hides the lower part of the body. The broad shoulders are emphasised in early Buddhist sculptures of Mathura. These characteristics, and the slightly almond eye of Buddha Sakyamuni, hint at his descent from the Licchavi clan, related to the Proto-Tibetans by kinship and blood. Before the final domination of the Indo-Europeans, these Licchavis ruled in northern India and the Himalayan regions. Their principalities had democratic constitutions with equal rights and no discrimination of sex or race. Buddhism and its founder must be considered on the basis of this social structure which is confirmed in the oldest texts as well as in the modern Oxford History of India.

Physical Marks

Ushnisha, the Enlightenment Elevation above the fontanelle; is the flame-topped elevation on the head of the Buddha, defined as that which emerges from the head of a Fully Enlightened One.

Urna, the mark in the centre of the forehead, called the Eye of Wisdom, also depicted as a Bundle of Rays or fine hairs between the eyebrows.

The lower part of the body is covered by the Diamond-Seat (Vajrasana). This is the meditation pose(Dhayanasana) of utmost concentration with the legs crossed so that the soles are visible.

The Subtle Energy-Spheres of the Body

The Enlightenment-Centre, the Top of the Head or fontanelle above the upper cerebrum, called Sphere of the Thousand-petalled Lotus (SAHASHRARA-CAKRA).

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The cerebral centre of thinking and conscious-power, called Command-Centre (AJNA-CAKRA), the forehead between the eyebrows; ascribed to lotus-centre.

The guttural centre or subtle Sphere of Speech (VISHUDDHA-CAKRA) at the base of the throat.

The cardiac plexus, the emotional Sphere of the Inner Voice (ANAHATA-CAKRA), called the Source of the Heart, situated in the central region of the thorax or chest.

The solar plexus with the gastric plexus, called 'the brain of the belly', Fiery-lustrous or Navel-Centre(MANIPURA-CAKRA) in the region of the loins and connected with the lumbar plexus.

The sacral plexus, called Root-Centre (MULADHARA-CAKRA) or Secret Place, being the root of all streams of vital energy (NADIS) in the region of the rump-bone or sacrum.

The human body is the receptacle of the power of thinking described as a bundle of energy and pervaded by the so-called breath of life flowing in subtle streams throughout the body.

Buddhist Sculptures

During the 2nd to 1st century BCE, sculptures became more explicit, representing episodes of the Buddha's life and teachings. These took the form of votive tablets or friezes, usually in relation to the decoration of stupas. Although India had a long sculptural tradition and a mastery of rich iconography, the Buddha was never represented in human form, but only through Buddhist symbolism. This period may have been aniconic.

Sculpturing statues is one of the most ancient and endearing Arts which speaks directly to ones heart. The sculpturing of Buddha Statues is an art coming down from 2500 years and one of the most talented of them is Mr. U.L Wimal Premachandra , who entered this field more than 12 years ago.

He is not only well known in Sri Lanka but also has made a name for himself in Asian countries like India and Thailand , European countries like Australia, Canada and Germany. This respected and world renown sculptor has a priceless collection of Buddha Statues.

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This reluctance towards anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha, and the sophisticated development of aniconic symbols to avoid it (even in narrative scene where other human figures would appear). This tendency remained as late as the 2nd century CE in the southern parts of India, in the art of the Amaravati School. It has been argued that earlier anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha may have been made of wood and may have perished since then. However, no related archaeological evidence has been found.

Famous Statues of Buddha in India

Buddhism originated in the eastern part of Indian Subcontinent between 6th and 4th centuries BCE but later proliferated in other parts of Asia. Surprisingly, the population of Buddhists living in India, at present, is less than 4% but still there is a significant concentration of followers in many countries. Thailand tops the world with 95% followers.

Irrespective of the status of Buddhism as a religion or philosophy of living in the world today, the statues of the Buddha are reminiscent of its existence in earlier periods as also of its relevance even today. Tourist still throng parks and monasteries having statues, paintings and other relics of Buddha.

This Hub takes you to statues of Buddha, both old and some latest additions, in different parts of India.

Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh

Standing 18 meters high and weighing 350 tons, the monolithic Statue of Buddha in the middle of Hussain Sagar, is one of the tallest Statues of Buddha in Asia. The base is a rock of Gibraltar and the Statue is a single white marble. The twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad have a common link of Hussain Sagar and the tall Statue of Buddha is the main attraction for tourists.

Illuminated Buddha Statue at Hyderabad

Farther Night View

The night view is equally attractive. Illuminated Statue of Buddha presents a gorgeous view. Travelling from

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Secunderabad to Hyderabad or the other way round provides good opportunity for the commuters to have a night view of illuminated Buddha from many angles.

Near Belum Caves, Andhra Pradesh

Belam caves in Andhra Pradesh are known to be used by Jains and Buddhists monks for many centuries. Budhhist relics were found inside the caves which bear testimony to this assertion. There is a hillock nearby the caves where a giant statue of the Buddha has been erected and is a major tourist attraction.

#3. Bojjanakonda near Anakapalle of Visakhapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh

Bojjanakonda is one of the two adjacent hillocks near Anakapalle in Vishakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. Both of these are Buddhist sites having rock-cut caves and many monolithic stupas. Believed to be dating between 4th and 9th century A.D., there is a large rock-cut image of Buddha in the cave Monastery.

Rajgir, Bihar

Vishwa Shanti Stupa (World Peace Pagoda) on Vulture Peak, Rajgir, Bihar

It a statue of sitting Buddha in the historic city of Rajgir in Bihar. Buddha lived here for several years and spread his teachings. The picturesque small town of Rajgir is known for rock cut caves where Bhuddha used to retreat and five holy hills surrounding it. The statue is placed in a Pagoda at Vulture Peak where Indian Classical Performing Arts Festival is held every year from 24th to 26th October.

Bodhgaya, Bihar

Maha Bodhi Temple (World Heritage Site), Bodhgaya

80 ft (25 m) tall statue unveiled on November 18, 1989 was built by 120000 stone masons and it took seven years to complete it. The great statue is next to the World Heritage Site Mahabodhi Temple (shown below) at Bodhgaya and its

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consecration ceremony was graced by His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama.

Norbulingka Institute, Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh

Deden Tsuglagkhang Temple, a spiritual center of the Norbulingka Institute, situated at Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh has a statue of Buddha Shakyamuni. Made by Pemba Dorjee, this gilded copper statue is, perhaps, largest of this type outside Tibet.

BUY NOW

Golden Temple at Bailakuppam, Coorg, Karnataka

Reflection of the Three Statues

Situated in a calm and peaceful surroundings at Bailakuppam (also Bylakuppe) near Kushalnagar in Coorg district of Karnataka State, there is a large Tibetan settlement and Monastery. Golden Temple here has gold-coated nearly 30 ft tall statues of Buddha along with Padmasambhava and Amitayus. Reflection of three beautiful adds to the grandeur of this place.

Ajanta Caves, Maharashtra

Ajanta Caves in Maharashtra is a World Heritage Site with 30 caves carved over a period of time starting with 2nd century B. C. These caves have strong basalt rocks conducive for carving and a whole lot of carved rocks depicting life of Buddha, hunting scenes and many elephants and also paintings can be scene in these caves. There is a beautiful statue of reclining Buddha in Cave No. 26 in the Ajanta caves. Still very popular site because of historical importance. There are other statues of Buddha also in these Caves.

Gorai, Mumbai, Maharashtra

Unveiled on May 27, 2010, this statue of Buddha, weighing 60 tones and having a height of 21 ft, is located at Global Vipassana Pagoda. The Pagoda is unique in having the world's largest stone dome without having any pillars to support the

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structure. It is a replica of Shwedagon Pagoda in Myanmar and built north of Mumbai at Gorai on a peninsula.

Buy Now

Dehradun, Uttarakhand

Dedicated to Dalai Lama, this statue of Buddha is 103 ft high and one of the major attractions for the tourists in Dehradun. Located at Kagyu Monastery near Mindrolling (pronounced minhdrohlyn) Centre in Clement Town at Dehradun, this is believed to be the tallest statue of Buddha in India. The Centre is considered to be a 'Place of Perfect Emancipation'. There is a large colony of Tibetans who follow Buddhism all around this Monastery.

Twang, Arunachal Pradesh

Monastery in Arunachal Pradesh is known to be the biggest Buddhist monastery in the world after Lhasa, Tibet. Also, it has historical significance that 14th Dalai Lama crossed over to India in 1959 and rested at this Monastery for some days. The 24 ft guided statue of Buddha at Tawang gompa also has a photo of Dalai Lama down in the middle.

Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh

This is one of the latest additions in statues of Buddha in India. Located not far away from Varanasi (Banaras) in Uttar Pradesh at the Thai Buddha Vihar, this 80 feet tall standing statue is a joint Indo-Thai venture. It took about 14 years to complete this giant sandstone statue having 815 stones. The beautiful garden around the statue makes it a great spot at Sarnath which is considered to be the place where Buddha delivered his first sermon. It is not out of place to call Sarnath the 'Birthplace of Buddhism' and this statue assume great importance.

Reclining buddha in Chowkham, Arunachal Pradesh

Chowkham in Arunachal Pradesh is a famous place for relics of Buddha. Made in Thai structural style, this place is meant for meditation.

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Jammu and Kashmir

Believed to be the first Monastery in Ladakh, 52 kms away from Leh, Likir Gompa is known to be a pilgrimage for the Buddhists. There is a 75 foot tall statue of the Buddha in sitting posture on the roof in the Klu-kkhyil ("water spirits") wealthiest fort-monastery in Likir, Ladakh. It is certainly an unusual posture attracting tourists.

Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir

Close up of the Maitreya statue and Tikse Monastery

In order to commemorate the visit of Dalai Lama at Thikse Monastery in Ladakh (Jammu and Kashmir) in 1970, a huge statue, nearly 49 ft high, was erected. This statue of Buddha is called Maitreya (future) Buddha and it covers two storeys of the building of the Monastery located at 11800 ft. The 12-storeyed Gompa (Monastery) is known for its resemblance with the one at Potala Palace in Tibet and is storing a large number of wall paintings, swords, statues and stupas depicting Buddhist art.

The statues is unique as it has Buddha seated in lotus position unlike others which normally are in standing or sitting postures and also for its having majestic and delightedly colourful looks.

Greco-Buddhist art is the artistic manifestation of Greco-Buddhism, a cultural syncretism between the Classical Greek culture and Buddhism, which developed over a period of close to 1000 years in Central Asia, between the conquests of Alexander the Great in the 4th century BCE, and the Islamic conquests of the 7th century CE. Greco-Buddhist art is characterized by the strong idealistic realism of Hellenistic art and the first representations of the Buddha in human form, which have helped define the artistic (and particularly, sculptural) canon for Buddhist art throughout the Asian continent up to the present. Though dating is uncertain, it appears that strongly Hellenistic styles lingered in the East for several centuries after they had declined around the Mediterranean, as late as the 5th century CE. Some aspects of

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Greek art were adopted while others did not spread beyond the Greco-Buddhist area; in particular the standing figure, often with a relaxed pose and one leg flexed, and the flying cupids or victories, who became popular across Asia asapsaras. Greek foliage decration was also influential, with Indian versions of the Corinthian capital appearing.

The origins of Greco-Buddhist art are to be found in the Hellenistic Greco-Bactrian kingdom (250 BCE – 130 BCE), located in today's Afghanistan, from which Hellenistic culture radiated into the Indian subcontinent with the establishment of the small Indo-Greek kingdom (180 BCE-10 BCE). Under the Indo-Greeks and then the Kushans, the interaction of Greek and Buddhist culture flourished in the area of Gandhara, in today's northern Pakistan, before spreading further into India, influencing the art of Mathura, and then the Hindu art of the Gupta empire, which was to extend to the rest of South-East Asia. The influence of Greco-Buddhist art also spread northward towards Central Asia, strongly affecting the art of the Tarim Basin and the Dunhuang Caves, and ultimately the sculpted figure in China, Korea, and Japan.

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5

Stupa

A stupa is a mound-like or hemispherical structure containing Buddhist relics, typically the ashes of Buddhist monks, used by Buddhists as a place of meditation. Stupas originated as pre-Buddhist earthen burial mounds, in which ascetics were buried in a seated position, called chaitya. After the parinirvana of the Buddha, his remains were cremated and the ashes divided and buried under eight mounds with two further mounds encasing the urn and the embers. Little is known about these early stupas, particularly since it has not been possible to identify the original ten monuments. However, some later stupas, such as at Sarnath and Sanchi, seem to be embellishments of earlier mounds.

The stupa was elaborated as Buddhism spread to other Asian countries becoming, for example, the chorten of Tibet and the pagoda in East Asia. The pagoda has varied forms that also include bell-shaped and pyramidal styles. In the Western context, there is no clear distinction between the stupa and the pagoda. In general, however, stupa is used for a Buddhist structure of India or south-east Asia, while pagoda refers to a building in East Asia which can be entered and which may be secular in purpose.

Stupas were built in Sri Lanka soon after King Devanampiyatissa converted to Buddhism, the first stupa to be built was the Thuparamaya. Later on Sri Lanka went on to build many stupas over the years, some like theJetavanarama

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in Anuradhapura being one of the tallest ancient structures in the world.

NOTABLE STUPAS

Ghalegay hosts one of the biggest stupas at Mohallah Singardar in district Swat, Pakistan.

A stupa was discovered at Sopara, an ancient port near Mumbai, and is believed to be one of the most ancient stupas in the world. The oldest known stupa is the Dhamek Stupa atSarnath, India, while the tallest is the Phra Pathom Chedi in Nakhon Pathom, Thailand, at a height of 127 metres. The Great Stupa at Sanchi or the Sanchi Stupa in Madhya Pradesh in Central India is the oldest stone building in India. In Sri Lanka, the ancient city of Anuradhapura includes some of the tallest, most ancient and best preserved stupas in the world, such as Ruwanwelisaya.

The most elaborate stupa is the 8th century Borobudur monument in Java, Indonesia. The upper rounded terrace with rows of bell shaped stupas contained buddha images symbolizingArupadhatu, the sphere of formlessness. The main stupa itself is empty, symbolizing complete perfection of enlightenment. The main stupa is only the crown part of the monument, while the base is pyramidal structure elaborate with galleries adorned with bas relief of scenes derived from Buddhist text depicted the life of Siddharta Gautama. Borobudur unique and significant architecture has been acknowledge by UNESCO as the largest buddhist monument in the world.

Types of stupas

Built for a variety of reasons, Buddhist stupas are classified based on form and function into five types:

- Relic stupa, in which the relics or remains of the Buddha, his disciples and lay saints are interred.
- Object stupa, in which the items interred are objects belonged to the Buddha or his disciples such as a begging bowl or robe, or important Buddhist scriptures.

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- Commemorative stupa, built to commemorate events in the lives of Buddha or his disciples.
- Symbolic stupa, to symbolise aspects of Buddhist theology, for example, Borobuddur is considered to be the symbol of "the Three Worlds (dhatu) and the spiritual stages (bhumi) in a Mahayana bodhisattva's character."
- Votive stupa, constructed to commemorate visits or to gain spiritual benefits, usually at the site of prominent stupas which are regularly visited.

Sanchi Stupa

Sanchi Stupa is located at Sanchi Town in Raisen District of the state of Madhya Pradesh, India, it is located 46 km north east of Bhopal.

The 'Great Stupa' at Sanchi is the oldest stone structure in India and was originally commissioned by the emperor Ashoka the Great in the 3rd century BCE. Its nucleus was a simple hemispherical brick structure built over the relics of the Buddha. It was crowned by the chatra, a parasol-like structure symbolising high rank, which was intended to honour and shelter the relics. The construction work of this stupa was overseen by Ashoka's wife, Devi herself, who was the daughter of a merchant of Vidisha. Sanchi was also her birthplace as well as the venue of her and Ashoka's wedding. In the 1st century BCE, four elaborately carvedtoranas (ornamental gateways) and a balustrade encircling the entire structure were added.

Sanchi, variously known as Kakanaya, Kakanava, Kakanadabota and Bota-Sriparvata in ancient times, has a singular distinction of having remarkable specimen of Buddhist art and architecture right from the early Mauryan period (c. third century BC to twelfth century AD). Sanchi is famous in the world for stupas, monolithic Asokan pillar, temples, monasteries and sculptural wealth.

It was Emperor Asoka who laid the foundations of a religious centre at Sanchi fascinated probably by the location of the hill or because of his Queen Devi, who was the daughter of a merchant of Vidisha. He erected the Great Stupa (Stupa

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1) here after redistribution of mortal remains of Lord Buddha for erecting several stupas all over the country in order to spread Buddhism. This stupa was originally a low structure of brick, half the diameter of the present edifice hemispherical in shape with raised terraces at the base. It was enclosed by a wooden railing and a stone umbrella at the top. This Great Stupa served as a nucleus to the large Buddhist establishment during the later period.

During Sunga times, several edifices were raised at Sanchi and its surrounding hills. The Asokan stupa was enlarged and faced with stones and decorated with balustrades, staircases and a harmika on the top.

In the first century BC the Andhra-Satavahanas, who had extended their sway over the eastern Malwa, caused the elaborately carved gateways to Stupa 1. The Great Stupa of Sanchi displays an austere grandeur and the exquisite carvings of the doorway depict in detail the significant episodes and miracles from Lord Buddha's life and events depicted in the Buddhist Jataka stories.

The reconstruction of Temple 40 and erection of Stupas 2 and 3 also seem to date back around the same time.

From the second to fourth century AD Sanchi and Vidisha came under the Kushanas and Kshatrapas and subsequently passed on to the hands of the Guptas. During the Gupta period some temples were also built and sculptures were added displaying the classical grace and simplicity of the era. Further, statues of Lord Buddha seated in the canopies facing the four entrances of the Great Stupa were also added. Sanchi also flourished during the 7th – 12th centuries A.D. when shrines and monasteries were continued to be added. Thus Sanchi displays harmonious co-existence of Hindu and Buddhist faiths.

Since the fourteenth century Sanchi remained deserted and uncared for till 1818 when General Taylor rediscovered the site. Sir John Marshall established an archaeological museum in 1919, which was later transformed into the present site museum at Sanchi.

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Presently under an UNESCO project Sanchi and Satdhara, a Buddhist site, 10 km south-east of Sanchi, is being further excavated, conserved and environmentally developed.

Maurya Period

The 'Great Stupa' at Sanchi is the oldest structure and was originally commissioned by the emperor Ashoka the Great in the 3rd century BCE. Its nucleus was a hemispherical brick structure built over the relics of the Buddha. It was crowned by the chatra, a parasol-like structure symbolising high rank. A pillar of finely polished sandstone was also erected. The old stupa was later covered when it was expanded. The bottom part of the pillar still stands. The upper parts of the pillar are placed under a canopy nearby. The pillar has an Ashokan inscription (Schism Edict) and an inscription in the ornamental Sankha Lipi from the Gupta period.

Sunga period

On the basis of Ashokavadana, it is presumed that the stupa may have been vandalized at one point sometime in the 2nd century BCE, an event some have related to the rise of the Sunga emperor Pushyamitra Sunga who overtook the Mauryan Empire as an army general. It has been suggested that Pushyamitra may have destroyed the original stupa, and his son Agnimitra rebuilt it. During the later rule of the Sunga, the stupa was expanded with stone slabs to almost twice its original size. The dome was flattened near the top and crowned by three superimposed parasols within a square railing. With its many tiers it was a symbol of the dharma, the Wheel of the Law. The dome was set on a high circular drum meant for circumambulation, which could be accessed via a double staircase. A second stone pathway at ground level was enclosed by a stone balustrade with four monumental gateways (toranas) facing the cardinal directions. The buildings which seem to have been commissioned during the rule of the Sungas are the Second and Third stupas (but not the highly decorated gateways, which are from the following Satavahana period,

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as known from inscriptions), and the ground balustrade and stone casing of the Great Stupa.

Satavahana period

The gateways and the balustrade were built and colored, then appeared to have been commissioned by the Satavahana. An inscription records the gift of one of the top architraves of the Southern Gateway by the artisans of the Satavahana king Satakarni:

"Gift of Ananda, the son of Vasithi, the foreman of the artisans of rajan Siri Satakarni".

DC Sircar observes that palaeographically the Hathigumpha record is slightly later than Naneghat record whereas the letters of Sanchi inscription of Satakarni resemble the script of Hathigumpha inscription. Kharavela in his inscription mentions one Satakarni, who is identified as Satakarni II, who is also identical to the one who inscribed in Sanchi. If this is true, then the dating of Sanchi gateway and balustrade belong to the much earlier period of 180-160 BC.

Although made of stone, they were carved and constructed in the manner of wood and the gateways were covered with narrative sculptures. They showed scenes from the life of the Buddha integrated with everyday events that would be familiar to the onlookers and so make it easier for them to understand the Buddhist creed as relevant to their lives. At Sanchi and most other stupas the local population donated money for the embellishment of the stupa to attain spiritual merit. There was no direct royal patronage. Devotees, both men and women, who donated money towards a sculpture would often choose their favourite scene from the life of the Buddha and then have their names inscribed on it. This accounts for the random repetition of particular episodes on the stupa (Dehejia 1992). On these stone carvings the Buddha was never depicted as a human figure. Instead the artists chose to represent him by certain attributes, such as the horse on which he left his father's home, his footprints, or a canopy under the bodhi tree at the point of his enlightenment. The human body was thought to be too confining for the Buddha.

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Some of the friezes of Sanchi also show devotees in Greek attire (Greek clothing, attitudes, and musical instruments) celebrating the stupa.

Later periods

Further stupas and other religious Buddhist structures were added over the following centuries until the 12th century AD. Temple 17 is probably one of the earliest Buddhist temples as it dates to the early Gupta period. It consists of a flat roofed square sanctum with a portico and four pillars. The interior and three sides of the exterior are plain and undecorated but the front and the pillars are elegantly carved, giving the temple an almost 'classical' appearance (Mitra 1971).

Temple 45 was the last Buddhist temple built during 10-11th century. Also at this time the monuments were enclosed within a wall. With the decline of Buddhism in India, the monuments of Sanchi went out of use and fell into a state of disrepair. In 1818, General Taylor of the Bengal Cavalry recorded a visit to Sanchi. At that time the monuments appear to have been left undisturbed for long time and in generally good preservation.

Western rediscovery

A British officer in 1818, General Taylor, was the first known Western historian to document (in English) the existence of Sanchi. Amateur archaeologists and treasure hunters ravaged the site until 1881, when proper restoration work was initiated. Between 1912 and 1919 the structures were restored to their present condition under the supervision of Sir John Marshall.

Today, around fifty monuments remain on the hill of Sanchi, including three stupas and several temples. The monuments have been listed among the UNESCO World Heritage Sites since 1989.

Chetiyagiri Vihara and the Sacred Relics

The bone relics (dhatu) of Buddhist Masters along with the reliquaries, obtained by Maisey and Cunningham were

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divided by them and taken to England as personal trophies. Maisey's family sold the objects to Victoria and Albert Museum where they stayed for a long time. The Buddhists in England, Sri Lanka and India, lead by the Mahabodhi Society demanded that they be returned. Some of the relics of Sariputta and Moggallana were sent back to Sri Lanka, where they were publicly displayed in 1947. Almost entire population of Sri Lanka visited them. They were later returned to India. A new temple Chetiyagiri Vihara was constructed to house the relics, in 1952. In a nationalistic sense, this marked the formal reestablishment of the Buddhist tradition in India. Some of the relics were obtained by Burma.

Inscriptions

Sanchi, especially Stupa 1, has a large number of Brahmi inscriptions. Although most of them are small and mention donations, they are of great historical significance. James Prinsep in 1837, noted that most of them ended with the same two Brahmi characters. Princep took them as "danam" (donation), which permitted the decipherment of the Brahmi script,.

An analysis of the donation records shows that while a large fraction of the donors were local (with no town specified), a number of them were from Ujjain, Vidisha, Kurara, Nadinagar, Mahisati, Kurghara, Bhogavadhan and Kamdagigam.

The inscriptions include those from Maurya, Shunga/ Satavahana (175 BC-15 AD), Kushana (100-150 AD), Gupta (600-800 AD, see Sanchi inscription of Candragupta II). The Ye Dharma Hetu inscription in Temple 45 may be dated to 9th century.

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6

Mahabodhi Temple

Mahabodhi Temple is one of the ancient and most important shrines of India. Located at Bodhgaya, Mahabodhi Mahavihara Temple is easily accessible from the major towns and cities of Bihar. The nearest airport is located at Patna that lies at a distance of 96 kms from Gaya. The holy town Bodh Gaya or Gaya has its own railway station. The town is also connected with major cities by network of roads. The literal version of Mahabodhi Temple is the Great Awakening Temple.

Bodhgaya is a renowned place where Lord Buddha got enlightenment. Perched on the banks of Niranjana River, Bodhgaya is a highly revered site of Buddhists. Pilgrims from all over the globe come to visit Bodhgaya, the awakening site. In the folklores, Bodhgaya has been mentioned as the place of great importance. According to Jatakas, Bodhgaya is the navel of the earth. This is only place that could abide the power of the Buddha's attainment.

Mahabodhi Temple is regarded to have been constructed by Emperor Ashoka, who visited the place after 250 years of enlightenment. It boasts of a 52 m tall spire that houses the colossal gilded image of Lord Buddha. In the sanctum sanctorum, the huge image of Buddha looks mesmerizing in which he is sitting in a 'Bhumisparsh Mudra' (touching the ground). It is said that the image is 1700 years old and positioned in a manner that Lord Buddha faces the east. Mahabodhi Temple along with Bodhi Tree completes the holy pilgrimage to Bodhgaya.

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Bodhi Tree is actually a fig tree, which grew from the original tree under whose kind shelter Lord Sakyamuni meditated and ultimately attained enlightenment. Owing to this, he became Buddha. Bodhi Tree is a significant part of Bodh Gaya, which is believed to grow on the day, Gautama Buddha was born. Under Bodhi tree, there is a platform embracing the footprints of Lord Buddha carved in stone. In its vicinity, a slab of red sandstone adorns the site. This slab marks the spot where the Lord sat in meditation.

The temple is festooned with friezes that depict the life scenes of Buddha. Along the northern wall of temple, Chankramana Chaitya (Jewel Path) is a raised walkway, where Lord Buddha used to meditate while walking. Adjoining the temple, there is lotus pond that is said to have been the place, where Lord Buddha executed his ablutions. The original temple is assumed to have been constructed in the 3rd century, however the present structure dates back to 5th or 6th century.

Built wholly in brick, Mahabodhi Temple is one of the earliest Buddhist shrines that have managed to restrain the ravages of the times. Mahabodhi Temple is regarded as the excellent specimen of Indian brickwork. This oldest brick structure became the role model for many later architectural works. In 2002, the marvelous temple was announced as the World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Mahabodhi Temple is acclaimed to be the property of Bihar State Government.

Architecture

The history of Mahabodhi Temple is not apparent. The style of the edifice declares that it was built primarily to form a monument, not a shrine of Buddha. The four towers on the corners rise elegantly, escorting the main tower to an extent. Encircled on all four sides by stone railings, Mahabodhi Temple bears railings of two types, equally in style and material. The older railings are made from sandstone and trace their origin around 150 BC. Dating back to Gupta period (300 CE - 600 CE), the other railings are erected from unpolished coarse granite. The old railings comprise images of Hindu deities, while the later ones have got figures of stupas (reliquary shrines) and garudas (eagles).

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The Buddha

Traditional accounts say that, around 530 BC, Siddhartha Gautama, a young prince who saw the suffering of the world and wanted to end it, reached the forested banks of Falgu River, near the city of Gaya, India. There he sat in meditation under a peepal tree (Ficus religiosa or Sacred Fig), which later became known as the Bodhi tree. According to Buddhist scriptures, after three days and three nights, Siddharta attained enlightenment and the answers that he had sought. In that location, Mahabodhi Temple was built by Emperor Ashoka in around 260 BC.

The Buddha then spent the succeeding seven weeks at seven different spots in the vicinity meditating and considering his experience. Several specific places at the current Mahabodhi Temple relate to the traditions surrounding these seven weeks:

- The first week was spent under the Bodhi tree.
- During the second week, the Buddha remained standing and stared, uninterrupted, at the Bodhi tree. This spot is marked by the Animeshlocha Stupa, that is, the unblinking stupa or shrine, which is located on the north-east of the Mahabodhi Temple complex. There stands a statue of Buddha with his eyes fixed towards the Bodhi tree.
- The Buddha is said to have walked back and forth between the location of the Animeshlocha Stupa and the Bodhi tree. According to legend, lotus flowers sprung up along this route, it is now called Ratnachakarma or the jewel walk.
- He spent the fourth week near Ratnagar Chaitya, located near north - east side.
- During the fifth week, Buddha answered in details to the queries of Brahmins under Ajapala Nigodh tree, now marked by a pillar.
- He spent the sixth week next to Lotus pond.
- He spent the seventh week under Rajyatna tree.

Traditional Holy Site

The Bodhi tree at Bodhgaya is directly connected to the life of the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama (566—486 BCE), who attained enlightenment or perfect insight when he was meditating under an ancestor of this Pipal tree. The temple

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was built directly to the east of the Bodhi tree under which the Buddha spent his first week after attaining enlightenment (or its direct descendant in a line that continues to this day).

According to Buddhist mythology, if no Bodhi tree grows at the site, the ground around the Bodhi tree is devoid of all plants for a distance of one royal karîsa and nothing can travel in the air immediately above it, not evenSakka.

According to the Jatakas, the navel of the earth lies at this spot, and no other place can support the weight of the Buddha's attainment. Another Buddhist tradition claims that when the world is destroyed at the end of a kalpa, the Bodhimanda is the last spot to disappear, and will be the first to appear when the world emerges into existence again. Tradition also claims that a lotus will bloom there, and if a Buddha is born during that the new kalpa, the lotus flowers in accordance with the number of Buddhas expected to arise. According to legend, in the case of Gautama Buddha, a Bodhi tree sprang up on the day he was born.

Temple Construction

In approximately 250 BCE, about 200 years after the Buddha attained Enlightenment, Buddhist Emperor Asoka visited Bodh Gaya in order to establish a monastery and shrine on the holy site. The new Mahabodhi temple included a diamond throne (called the Vajrasana) to mark the exact spot of the Buddha's enlightenment. While Asoka is considered the Mahabodhi temple's founder, the current structure dates from the 5th–6th century. One scholar, however, considers the building "largely a nineteenth-century British Archaeological Survey of India reconstruction based on what is generally believed to be an approximately fifth-century structure." Prior to that, there seems to have been a pyramidal structure perhaps built in about the second century. Knowledge of it comes only from a small, circa fourth century terracotta plaque found at modern Patna. It is significant that this version does not have the upper terrace with the small temples in the four corners. These small temples, although not used as such today, probably reflected certain esoteric

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traditions in Buddhism that were emerging more and more into less esoteric contexts by the late fourth and early fifth century. The pyramidal temple probably replaced an open pavilion that had been constructed around the tree and the Asokan platform. Representations of this early temple arc found at Sanci, on the tora Gas of Stûpa I, dating from around 25 BC, and on a relief carving from the stupa railing at Bhâhrut (Fig.20), from the early ÚuGga period (c. 185-c. 73 BC).

Mahabodhi is one of the earliest Buddhist temples built entirely in brick that is still standing in India, from the late Gupta period.

Decline

Buddhism declined when the dynasties patronizing it declined, following White Hun and the early Arab Islamic invasions such as that of Muhammad bin Qasim. A strong revival occurred under the Pala Empire in the northeast of the subcontinent (where the temple is situated). Mahayana Buddhism flourished under the Palas between the 8th and the 12th century. However, after the defeat of the Palas by the Hindu Sena dynasty, Buddhism's position again began to erode and became nearly extinct in India. During the 12th century CE, Bodh Gaya and the nearby regions were invaded by Muslim Turk armies. During this period, the Mahabodhi Temple fell into disrepair and was largely abandoned. Over the following centuries, the monastery's abbot or mahant position became occupied by the area's primary landholder, who claimed ownership of the Mahabodhi Temple grounds.

In the 13th century, Burmese Buddhists built a temple with the same name and modeled on the original Mahabodhi Temple. See Mahabodhi Temple, Bagan.

Restoration

During the 11th century and the 19th century, Burmese rulers undertook restoration of the temple complex and surrounding wall. In the 1880s, the then-British government of India began to restore Mahabodhi Temple under the direction of Sir Alexander Cunningham. In 1885, Sir Edwin Arnold visited

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the site and under guidance from Ven. Weligama Sri Sumangala published several articles drawing the attention of the Buddhists to the deplorable conditions of Buddhagaya.

A short time later, in 1891, the Sri Lankan Buddhist leader Anagarika Dharmapala started a campaign to return control of the temple to Buddhists, over the objections of the Hindu mahant. The campaign was partially successful in 1949, when control passed from the Hindu mahant to the state government of Bihar, which established a temple management committee. The committee has nine members, a majority of whom, including the chairman, must by law be Hindus. Mahabodhi's first head monk under the management committee was Anagarika Munindra, a Bengali man who had been an active member of the Maha Bodhi Society.

In 2013, the upper portion of the temple was covered with gold. The gold was a gift from the King of Thailand and devotees from Thailand, and installed with the approval Archaeological Survey of India.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

Mahabodhi Temple is constructed of brick and is one of the oldest brick structures to have survived in eastern India. It is considered to be a fine example of Indian brickwork, and was highly influential in the development of later architectural traditions. According UNESCO, "the present temple is one of the earliest and most imposing structures built entirely in brick from Gupta period". Mahabodhi Temple's central tower rises 55 metres (180 ft), and were heavily renovated in the 19th century. The central tower is surrounded by four smaller towers, constructed in the same style.

The Mahabodhi Temple is surrounded on all four sides by stone railings, about two metres high. The railings reveal two distinct types, both in style as well as the materials used. The older ones, made of sandstone, date to about 150 BCE, and the others, constructed from unpolished coarse granite, are believed to be of the Gupta period (300–600 CE). The older railings have scenes such as Lakshmi, the Hindu goddess of wealth, being bathed by elephants; and Surya, the Hindu sun

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god, riding a chariot drawn by four horses. The newer railings have figures of stupas (reliquary shrines) and garudas (eagles). Images of lotus flowers also appear commonly.

Current status and management

The Bihar state government assumed responsibility for the protection, management, and monitoring of temple and its properties when India gained its independence. Pursuant to the Bodh Gaya Temple Act of 1949, such responsibilities are shared with the Bodhgaya Temple Management Committee, and an advisory board. By law, the Committee must consist of four Buddhist and four Hindu representatives, including the head of Sankaracharya Math monastery as an ex-officio Hindu member. The Committee serves for a three year term. A 2013 Amendment to Bodhgaya Temple Management Act allows the Gaya District Magistrate to be the Chairman of committee, even if he is not Hindu. The Advisory Board consists of the governor of Bihar and twenty to twenty-five other members, half of them from foreign Buddhist countries.

In June 2002, the Mahabodhi Temple became a UNESCO World Heritage Site. All finds of religious artifacts in the area are legally protected under the Treasure Trove Act of 1878.

The temple's head monk, Bhikkhu Bodhipala, resigned in 2007 after he was charged with cutting the branches of Holy Bodhi Tree on a regular basis and selling them to foreigners for significant amounts of money. A newspaper alleged that wealthy Thai buyers bought a branch with the cooperation of senior members of the temple's management committee. While the temple's spokesman stated that botanists had pruned the tree, the Bihar home secretary ordered the tree examined. A criminal charge was filed against Bodhipala. If convicted, Bodhipala would be subject to at least 10 years' imprisonment.

Following the expiration of the Committee's term in September 2007, Bihar's government delayed appointing a new Committee and the district magistrate administered the temple pending such appointment. Eventually, on May 16, 2008 the government announced the appointment of a new Temple Management Committee.

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7

Architecture of Ancient South India

The South Indian style of temple architecture is very distinct from that of the rest of India. It is convenient to resolve the types of architecture into four periods corresponding to the principal kingdoms that ruled in southern India down the centuries i.e. the Pallavas, Cholas, Pandyas and the Vijayanagara rulers. According to the plan — four sided, polygonal or curvilinear — the southern Vimanas are classified in the southern Silpa and Agama texts as Nagara, Dravida and Vesara.

The Architecture of Karnataka can be traced to 345 with that of the Kadamba Dynasty. Karnataka is a state in the southern part of India originally known as the State of Mysore. Over the centuries, architectural monuments within the region displayed a diversity of influences, often relaying much about the artistic trends of the rulers of twelve different dynasties. Its architecture ranges dramatically from majestic monolith, such as the Gomateshwara, to Hindu and Jain places of worship, ruins of ancient cities, mausoleums and palaces of different architectural hue. Mysore Kingdom (Wodeyar) rule has also given an architectural master structure in the St. Philomena's Church at Mysore (extolled by the King as a structure of divine compassion and the eager gratitude of men) which was completed in 1956, in addition to many Dravidian

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style architectural temples. Two of the monuments (Pattadakal and Hampi) are listed under the UNESCO World Heritage List of 22 cultural monuments in India. Styles of Indo-Saracenic, Renaissance, Corinthian, Hindu, Indo-Greek and Indo-British style palaces were built in Mysore, the city of palaces. Sikh architecture atBidar (1512) and also in Bangalore in 1956 can also be cited as having an impact on the architectural composition of the state.

Apart from the ancient traditional Buddhist Viharas which existed in India since ancient times, since the Independence of India in 1947, Karnataka has experienced some marked architectural changes, notably by the influx of Tibetan refugees which arrived in the state between 1963 and 1997, bringing with them the traditional Tibetan art and architectural styles, reflected in the Buddhist monastery at Bylakuppe for instance. Vidhana Soudha (built inBangalore in 1953) and the tallest temple at Murudeshwar are witnesses to the Neo–Dravidian architectural influences which have evolved since independence. The chronology of the architecture of Karnataka is elaborated in the right-hand box.

KADAMBA ARCHITECTURE

The Kadambas of Banavasi were the ancient royal dynasty of Karnataka from 345 to 525, and made a significant early contribution to the architectural heritage of Karnataka. Dr. G. M. Moraes opines that apart from using some unique features, the Kadambas incorporated a diversity of styles in their architecture (Kadamba architecture), derived from their predecessors and overlords, drawing upon the architectural tradition of the Satavahanas for instance. The Kadambas were the originators of the Karnataka architecture. The most prominent basic feature of their architecture is the Shikara (dome), called Kadamba Shikara. The Shikara is pyramid shaped and rises in steps without any decoration, with a stupika orkalasha at the top. Occasionally the pyramids had perforated screen windows. This style of Shikara was used several centuries later, having an influence on the Doddagaddavalli Hoysala Temple and the Mahakuta temples in Hampi. The

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Madhukeshwara (Lord Shiva) Temple in Banavasi was built by Kadambas, and has an intricately carved stone cot. Originally built by the Kadambas, it has undergone, over a period of a thousand years, many additions and renovations, from the Chalukyas to the rulers of Sonda. "Kadambotsava", an annual cultural festival is held here in the month of December.

Dravidian Architecture

Dravidian architecture was an architectural idiom that emerged in the Southern part of the Indian subcontinent or South India. It consists primarily of temples with pyramid shaped towers and are constructed of sandstone, soapstone or granite. Mentioned as one of three styles of temple building in the ancient book Vastu shastra, the majority of the existing structures are located in the Southern Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, and Andhra pradesh. Various kingdoms and empires such as the Cholas, the Chera, the Pandyas, the Pallavas, the Gangas, the Rashtrakutas, the Chalukyas, the Hoysalas, and Vijayanagara Empire among others have made substantial contribution to the evolution of Dravidian architecture. This styled architecture can also be found in parts of North India, Northeastern and central Sri Lanka, Maldives, and various parts of Southeast Asia. Angkor Wat in Cambodia and Prambanan in Indonesia were built based on Dravida architecture.

Influence from Different Periods

In Southern India seven kingdoms and empires stamped their influence on architecture during different times.

Sangam Period

From 1000BCE - 300CE, the greatest accomplishments of the kingdoms of the early Chola, Chera and the Pandyan kingdoms included brick shrines to deities Murugan, Shiva, Amman and Thirumal (Vishnu) of the Tamil pantheon. Some were built Several of these have been unearthed near Adichanallur, Kaveripoompuharpattinam and Mahabalipuram, and the construction plans of these sites of worship were shared to some detail in various poems of Sangam literature. One such temple,

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the Saluvannkuppan Murukan temple, unearthed in 2005, consists of three layers. The lowest layer, consisting of a brick shrine, is one of the oldest of its kind in South India, and is the oldest shrine found dedicated to Murukan. It is one of only two brick shrine pre Pallava Hindu temples to be found in the state, the other being the Veetrirundha Perumal Temple at Veppathur dedicated to Lord Vishnu. The dynasties of early medieval Tamilakkam expanded and erected structural additions to many of these brick shrines. Sculptures of erotic art, nature and deities from theMadurai Meenakshi Amman Temple, Chidambaram Thillai Nataraja Temple and the Srirangam Ranganathaswamy Temple date from the Sangam period.

Pallavas

The Pallavas ruled from AD (600–900) and their greatest constructed accomplishments are the single rock temples in Mahabalipuram and their capitalKanchipuram, now located in Tamil Nadu.

Pallavas were one of the pioneers of south Indian architecture. The earliest examples of temples in the Dravidian style belong to the Badami Chalukya-Pallava period. The earliest examples of Pallava constructions are rock-cut temples dating from 610 – 690 CE and structural temples between 690 – 900 CE. The greatest accomplishments of the Pallava architecture are the rock-cut temples at Mahabalipuram. There are excavated pillared halls and monolithic shrines known as rathas in Mahabalipuram. Early temples were mostly dedicated to Shiva. The Kailasanatha temple also called Rajasimha Pallaveswaram in Kanchipuram built by Narasimhavarman II also known as Rajasimha is a fine example of the Pallava style temple. Mention must be made here of the Shore Temple constructed by Narasimhavarman II near Mahabalipuram which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Contrary to popular impression about the succeeding empire of the Cholas pioneering in building large temple complexes, it was the Pallavas who actually pioneered not only in making large temples after starting construction of rock cut temples without using mortar, bricks etc.(**) The shining examples of

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such temples are the Thiruppadagam and Thiruooragam temples that have 28 and 35 feet (11 m) high images of Lord Vishnu in his manifestation as Pandavadhoothar and Trivikraman forms of himself. In comparison the Siva Lingams in the Royal Temples of the Cholas at Thanjavur and Gangaikonda Cholapurams are 17 and 18 feet (5.5 m) high. Considering that the Kanchi Kailasanatha Temple built by Rajasimha Pallava was the inspiration for Raja Raja Chola's Brihadeeswara at Thanjavur, it can be safely concluded that the Pallavas were among the first emperors in India to build both large temple complexes and very large deities and idols(**) Many Siva and Vishnu temples at Kanchi built by the great Pallava emperors and indeed their incomparable Rathas and the Arjuna's penance Bas Relief (also called descent of the Ganga) are proposed UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The continuous Chola, Pallava and Pandiyan belt temples (along with those of the Adigaimans near Karur and Namakkal), as well as the Sethupathy temple group between Pudukottai and Rameswaram uniformly represent the pinnacle of the South Indian Style of Architecture that surpasses any other form of architecture prevalent between the Deccan Plateau and Kaniyakumari. Needless to add that in the Telugu country the style was more or less uniformly conforming to the South Indian or Dravidian idiom of architecture.

Pandya

Srivilliputtur Andal Temple is the official symbol of the Government of Tamil Nadu. It is said to have been built by Periyaazhvar, the father-in-law of the Lord, with a purse of gold that he won in debates held in the palace of Pandya King Vallabhadeva.

The primary landmark of Srivilliputtur is 12-tiered tower structure dedicated to the Lord of Srivilliputtur, known as Vatapatrasayee. The tower of this temple rises 192 feet (59 m) high and is the official symbol of the Government of Tamil Nadu. Other significant temples of the Pandyas include the famous Meenakshi temple in Madurai.

Cholas

The Chola kings ruled from AD (848–1280) and included Rajaraja Chola I and his son Rajendra Chola who built temples

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such as the Brihadeshvara Temple of Thanjavur andBrihadeshvara Temple of Gangaikonda Cholapuram, the Airavatesvara Temple of Darasuram and the Sarabeswara (Shiva)Temple, also called the Kampahareswarar Temple at Thirubhuvanam, the last two temples being located near Kumbakonam. The first three among the above four temples are titled Great Living Chola Temples among the UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

The Cholas were prolific temple builders right from the times of the first king Vijayalaya Chola after whom the eclectic chain of Vijayalaya Chozhisvaram temple near Narttamalai exists. These are the earliest specimen of Dravidian temples under the Cholas. His son Aditya I built several temples around the Kanchi and Kumbakonam regions.

A Dravidian architecture Pillar in Airavatesvara Temple, Darasuram Thanjavur district.

Temple building received great impetus from the conquests and the genius of Aditya I Parantaka I, Sundara Chola, Rajaraja Chola and his son Rajendra Chola I.Rajendra Chola 1 built the Rajaraja Temple at Thanjur after his own name. The maturity and grandeur to which the Chola architecture had evolved found expression in the two temples of Tanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram. He also proclaimed himself as Gangaikonda. In a small portion of the Kaveri belt between Tiruchy-Tanjore-Kumbakonam, at the height of their power, the Cholas have left over 2300 temples, with the Tiruchy-Thanjavur belt itself boasting of more than 1500 temples. The magnificent Siva temple of Thanjavur built by Raja Raja I in 1009 as well as the Brihadisvara Temple of Gangaikonda Cholapuram, completed around 1030, are both fitting memorials to the material and military achievements of the time of the two Chola emperors. The largest and tallest of all Indian temples of its time, the Tanjore Brihadisvara is at the apex of South Indian architecture. In fact, two succeeding Chola kings Raja Raja II and Kulothunga III built the Airavateswara Temple at Darasuram and the Kampahareswarar Siva Temple at Tribhuvanam respectively,. both temples being on the outskirts of Kumbakonam around AD 1160 and AD 1200. All the four temples were built over a period of nearly 200 years reflecting the glory, prosperity and domain ruled by Chola emperors.

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Contrary to popular impression, the Chola emperors patronized and promoted construction of a large number of temples that were spread over most parts of the Chola empire. These include 40 of the 108 Vaishnava Divya Desams out of which 77 are found spread most of South India and others in Andhra and North India. In fact, the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple in Srirangam, which is the biggest temple in India (**) and the Chidambaram Natarajar Temple (though originally built by the Pallavas but possibly seized from the Cholas of the pre-Christian era when they ruled from Kanchi) were two of the most important temples patronized and expanded by the Cholas and from the times of the second Chola King Aditya I, these two temples have been hailed in inscriptions as the tutelary deities of the Chola Kings.

The Brihadeeswarar Temple, Tanjore (left) has a vimana tower that is 216 ft (66 m) high, a classical example of Dravidian architecture that inspired the shrines of the Prambanan temple compounds, Indonesia, which contains a 154 ft (47m) high central shrine to Shiva (middle left) Each temple shrine on the Koneswaram temple promontory extremity and theKetheeswaram temple and Munneswaram templecompounds contained tall gopuram towers by Chola rule of Trincomalee, Mannar, Puttalam and Chidambaram's expansion that escalated the building of those syncretic latter styles of Dravidian architecture seen across the continent pictured.

Of course, the two Brihadisvara Temples at Thanjavur and Gangaikonda Cholapuram as well as the other two Siva temples, namely the Airavatesvara Temple of Darasuram and the Sarabeswara (Shiva)Temple which is also popular as the Kampahareswarar Temple at Thirubhuvanam, both on the outskirts of Kumbakonam were the royal temples of the Cholas to commemorate their innumerable conquests and subjugation of their rivals from other parts of South India, Deccan Ilangai or Sri Lanka and the Narmada-Mahanadi-Gangetic belts (**). But the Chola emperors underlined their non-partisan approach to religious iconography and faith by treating the presiding deities of their other two peerless creations, namely the Ranganathaswamy Temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu at

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Srirangam and the Nataraja Temple at Chidambaram which actually is home to the twin deities of Siva and Vishnu (as the reclining Govindarajar) to be their 'Kuladheivams' or tutelary (or family) deities. The Cholas also preferred to call only these two temples which home their tutelary or family deities as Koil or the 'Temple', which denotes the most important places of worship for them, underlining their eq. The above-named temples are being proposed to be included among the UNESCO World Heritage Sites, which will elevate them to the exacting and exalting standards of the Great Living Chola Temples.

The temple of Gangaikondacholapuram, the creation of Rajendra Chola I, was intended to exceed its predecessor in every way. Completed around 1030, only two decades after the temple at Thanjavur and in much the same style, the greater elaboration in its appearance attests the more affluent state of the Chola Empire under Rajendra. This temple has a larger Siva linga than the one at Thanjavur but the Vimana of this temple is smaller in height than the Thanjavur vimana.

The Chola period is also remarkable for its sculptures and bronzes all over the world. Among the existing specimens in museums around the world and in the temples of South India may be seen many fine figures of Siva in various forms, such as Vishnu and his consort Lakshmi, and the Siva saints. Though conforming generally to the iconographic conventions established by long tradition, the sculptors worked with great freedom in the 11th and the 12th centuries to achieve a classic grace and grandeur. The best example of this can be seen in the form of Nataraja the Divine Dancer.

Badami Chalukyas

The Badami Chalukyas also called the Early Chalukyas, ruled from Badami, Karnataka in the period 543 – 753 CE and spawned the Vesara style called Badami Chalukya Architecture. The finest examples of their art are seen in Pattadakal, Aihole and Badami in northern Karnataka. Over 150 temples remain in the Malaprabha basin.

The most enduring legacy of the Chalukya dynasty is the architecture and art that they left behind. More than one

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hundred and fifty monuments attributed to the Badami Chalukya, and built between 450 and 700, remain in the Malaprabha basin in Karnataka.

The rock-cut temples of Pattadakal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Badami, Aihole and Mahakuta are their most celebrated monuments. Two of the famous paintings at Ajantacave no. 1, "The Temptation of the Buddha" and "The Persian Embassy" are attributed to them. This is the beginning of Chalukya style of architecture and a consolidation of South Indian style.

Rashtrakutas

The Rashtrakutas who ruled the deccan from Manyakheta, Gulbarga district, Karnataka in the period 753 – 973 CE built some of the finest Dravidian monuments at Ellora (theKailasanatha temple), in the rock cut architecture idiom. Some other fine monuments are the Jaina Narayana temple at Pattadakal and the Navalinga temples at Kuknur in Karnataka.

The Rashtrakutas contributed much to the culture of the Deccan. The Rashtrakuta contributions to art and architecture are reflected in the splendid rock-cut shrines at Ellora and Elephanta, situated in present day Maharashtra. It is said that they altogether constructed 34 rock-cut shrines, but most extensive and sumptuous of them all is the Kailasanatha temple at Ellora. The temple is a splendid achievement of Dravidian art. The walls of the temple have marvellous sculptures from Hindu mythology including Ravana, Shiva and Parvathi while the ceilings have paintings.

The project was commissioned by King Krishna I after the Rashtrakuta rule had spread into South India from the Deccan. The architectural style used was dravidian. It does not contain any of the Shikharas common to the Nagara style and was built on the same lines as the Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal in Karnataka.

Western Chalukyas

The Western Chalukyas also called the Kalyani Chalukyas or Later Chalukyas ruled the deccan from 973 – 1180 CE from

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their capital Kalyani in modern Karnataka and further refined the Chalukyan style, called the Western Chalukya architecture. Over 50 temples exist in the Krishna River-Tungabhadra doab in central Karnataka. The Kasi Vishveshvara at Lakkundi, Mallikarjuna at Kuruvatii, Kalleshwara temple at Bagali and Mahadeva at Itagi are the finest examples produced by the Later Chalukya architects.

The reign of Western Chalukya dynasty was an important period in the development of architecture in the deccan. Their architectural developments acted as a conceptual link between the Badami Chalukya Architecture of the 8th century and the Hoysala architecture popularised in the 13th century. The art of Western Chalukyas is sometimes called the "Gadag style" after the number of ornate temples they built in the Tungabhadra – Krishna River doab region of present day Gadag district in Karnataka. Their temple building reached its maturity and culmination in the 12th century, with over a hundred temples built across the deccan, more than half of them in present day Karnataka. Apart from temples they are also well known for ornate stepped wells (Pushkarni) which served as ritual bathing places, many of which are well preserved in Lakkundi. Their stepped well designs were later incorporated by the Hoysalas and the Vijayanagara empire in the coming centuries.

Hoysalas

The Hoysala kings ruled southern India during the period (1100–1343 CE) from their capital Belur and later Halebidu in Karnataka and developed a unique idiom of architecture called the Hoysala architecture in Karnataka state. The finest examples of their architecture are the Chennakesava Temple in Belur, Hoysaleswara temple in Halebidu, and theKesava Temple in Somanathapura.

The modern interest in the Hoysalas is due to their patronage of art and architecture rather than their military conquests. The brisk temple building throughout the kingdom was accomplished despite constant threats from the Pandyas to the south and the Seunas Yadavas to the north. Their architectural style, an offshoot

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of the Western Chalukya style,shows distinct Dravidian influences. The Hoysala architecture style is described as Karnata Dravida as distinguished from the traditional Dravida, and is considered an independent architectural tradition with many unique features.

Vijayanagara

The whole of South India was ruled by Vijayanagara Empire from (1343–1565 CE), who built a number of temples and monuments in their hybrid style in their capital Vijayanagarain Karnataka. Their style was a combination of the styles developed in South India in the previous centuries. In addition, the Yali columns (pillar with charging horse), balustrades (parapets) and ornate pillared manatapa are their unique contribution. King Krishna Deva Raya and others built many famous temples all over South India in Vijayanagara Architecture style.

Vijayanagara architecture is a vibrant combination of the Chalukya, Hoysala, Pandya and Chola styles, idioms that prospered in previous centuries. Its legacy of sculpture, architecture and painting influenced the development of the arts long after the empire came to an end. Its stylistic hallmark is the ornate pillared Kalyanamantapa (marriage hall), Vasanthamantapa (open pillared halls) and the Rayagopura (tower). Artisans used the locally available hard granite because of its durability since the kingdom was under constant threat of invasion. While the empire's monuments are spread over the whole of Southern India, nothing surpasses the vast open air theatre of monuments at its capital at Vijayanagara, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In the 14th century the kings continued to build Vesara or Deccan style monuments but later incorporated dravida-style gopurams to meet their ritualistic needs. The Prasanna Virupaksha temple (underground temple) of Bukka Raya I and the Hazare Rama temple of Deva Raya I are examples of Deccan architecture. The varied and intricate ornamentation of the pillars is a mark of their work. At Hampi, though the Vitthala temple is the best example of their pillared

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Kalyanamantapa style, the Hazara Ramaswamytemple is a modest but perfectly finished example. A visible aspect of their style is their return to the simplistic and serene art developed by the Chalukya dynasty. A grand specimen of Vijayanagara art, the Vitthala temple, took several decades to complete during the reign of the Tuluva kings.

Gomateshwara

Gomateshwara (983), situated in Shravanabelagola is a monolithic statue standing 17.8 metres (58 ft) high above a hill (618 steps climb leads to this monolith), and is visible from a distance of 30 kilometres (19 mi) and regarded as one of the largest monolithic statues in the world. The statue was built by the Ganga minister and commander Chavundaraya (940–989) in honour of Lord Bahubali. Carved from fine-grained white granite, the image stands on a lotus. It has no support up to the thighs and is 60 feet (18 m) tall with the face measuring 6.5 feet (2.0 m). With the serene expression on the face of the image, its curled hair with graceful locks, its proportional anatomy, the monolith size, and the combination of its artistry and craftsmanship have led it to be called the mightiest achievement in sculptural art in medieval Karnataka. It is the largest monolithic statue in the world.Panchakuta basadi (Jain basadi)

This is one of the most elegant monuments built in Dravidian, Vesara and Nagara styles during the period between 900 and 1000. The temple, which is oriented to the north towards the Brahmadeva pillar, has five shrines (hence the name Panchakuta). Three shrines are connected to a mantapa by a vestibule and consist of the main shrine of tirthankara Adinatha flanked by Neminatha shrine to the east and Shanthinatha shrine containing a 3 metres (9.8 ft) tall idol of the tirthankara to the west. The other two shrines, which are disconnected and lie to the north of the trikuta cluster (three shrines), are also dedicated to tirthankaras. These are two different monuments.

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8

Indian Rock-cut Architecture

The Rock-cut structures present the most spectacular piece of ancient Indian art specimen. Most of the rock-cut structures were related to various religious communities. In the beginning, remarkable Buddhist and Jain monuments were produced in areas such as Bihar in the east and Maharashtra in the west. Numerous caves were excavated by the Buddhist monks for prayer and residence purposes. The best examples of this are Chaityas and monasteries. Inside these rock-cut structures monks carved windows and balconies and gates in the shape of huge arch shaped openings.

Rock-cut architecture occupies a very important place in the history of Indian Architecture. The rock-cut architecture differs from traditional buildings in many ways. The rock-cut art is more similar to sculpture than architecture as structures were produced by cutting out solid rocks. Let's have a look at various specimen of rock-cut architecture in ancient India. Some prominent rock-cut structures of ancient India are Chaityas, Viharas, temples etc.

Indian rock-cut architecture is more various and found in greater abundance than any other form of rock-cut architecture around the world. Rock-cut architecture is the practice of creating a structure by carving it out of solid natural rock. Rock that is not part of the structure is removed until the only rock left is the architectural elements of the excavated

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interior. Indian rock-cut architecture is mostly religious in nature.

There are more than 1,500 known rock cut structures in India. Many of these structures contain artwork of global importance, and most are adorned with exquisite stone carvings. These ancient and medieval structures represent significant achievements of structural engineering and craftsmanship.

In India, caves have long been regarded as places of sanctity. Caves that were enlarged or entirely man-made were felt to hold the same sanctity as natural caves. In fact, the sanctuary in all Indian religious structures, even free-standing ones, retains the same cave-like feeling of sacredness, being small and dark without natural light. The oldest rock-cut architecture is found in the Barabar caves, Bihar built around the 3rd century BC. Other early cave temples are found in the western Deccan, mostly Buddhist shrines and monasteries, dating between 100 BC and 170 AD. Originally, they were probably accompanied by wooden structures, which would have deteriorated over time. Historically, rock-cut temples have retained a wood-like theme in adornment; skilled craftsmen learned to mimic timber texture, grain, and structure. The earliest cave temples include the Bhaja Caves, the Karla Caves, the Bedse Caves, the Kanheri Caves, and some of the Ajanta Caves. Relics found in these caves suggest a connection between the religious and the commercial, as Buddhist missionaries often accompanied traders on the busy international trading routes through India. Some of the more sumptuous cave temples, commissioned by wealthy traders, included pillars, arches, and elaborate facades during the time maritime trade boomed between the Roman Empire and south-east Asia.

Although free standing structural temples were being built by the 5th century, rock-cut cave temples continued to be built in parallel. Later rock-cut cave architecture became more sophisticated as in the Ellora Caves, culminating ultimately in the monolithic Kailash Temple. Although cave temples continued to be built until the 12th century, rock-cut architecture became almost totally structural in nature, made from rocks

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cut into bricks and built as free standing constructions. Kailash was the last spectacular rock-cut excavated temple. There are also a number of rock reliefs, relief sculptures carved into rock faces, outside caves or at other sites.

EARLY CAVES

The earliest caves employed by humans were natural caves used by local inhabitants for a variety of purposes, such as shrines and shelters. Evidence suggests that the caves were first occupied and altered during the Mesolithic period (6000 BC). Early examples included overhanging rock decorated with rock-cut designs. The Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka, a World Heritage Site, are located on the edge of the Deccan Plateau, where dramatic erosion has left massive sandstone outcrops. The area's many caves and grottos have yielded primitive tools and decorative rock paintings, reflections of the ancient tradition of human interaction with the landscape.

Cave temples

When Buddhist missionaries arrived, they naturally gravitated to caves for use as temples and abodes, in accord with their religious ideas of asceticism and the monastic life. The Western Ghats topography, with its flat-topped basalt hills, deep ravines, and sharp cliffs, was suited to their cultural inclinations. The earliest of the Kanheri Caves were excavated in the 1st and 2nd centuries B.C., as were those at Ajanta, which were occupied continuously by Buddhist monks from 200 BCE to 650 AD. As the Buddhist ideology encouraged involvement in trade, monasteries often became stopovers for inland traders and provided lodging houses along trade routes. As mercantile and royal endowments grew, cave interiors became more elaborate, with interior walls decorated in paintings, reliefs, and intricate carvings. Facades were added to the exteriors while the interiors became designated for specific uses, such as monasteries (viharas) and worship halls (chaityas). Over the centuries, simple caves began to resemble free-standing buildings, needing to be formally designed and requiring highly skilled artisans and craftsmen

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to complete. Theses artisans had not forgotten their timber roots and imitated the nuances of a wooden structure and the wood grain in working with stone.

Early examples of rock cut architecture are the Buddhist and Jain cave basadi, temples and monasteries, many with chandrashalas. The ascetic nature of these religions inclined their followers to live in natural caves and grottos in the hillsides, away from the cities, and these became enhanced and embellished over time. Although many temples, monasteries and stupas had been destroyed, by contrast cave temples are very well preserved as they are both less visible and therefore less vulnerable to vandalism as well as made of more durable material than wood and masonry. There are around 1200 cave temples still in existence, most of which are Buddhist. The residences of monks were called Viharas and the cave shrines, called Chaityas, were for congregational worship. The earliest rock-cut garbhagriha, similar to free-standing ones later, had an inner circular chamber with pillars to create a circumambulatory path (pradakshina) around the stupa and an outer rectangular hall for the congregation of the devotees.

The Ajanta Caves in Maharashtra, a World Heritage Site, are 30 rock-cut cave Buddhist temples carved into the sheer vertical side of a gorge near a waterfall-fed pool located in the hills of the Sahyadri mountains. Like all the locations of Buddhist caves, this one is located near main trade routes and spans six centuries beginning in the 2nd or 1st century B.C. A period of intense building activity at this site occurred under the Vakataka king Harisena between 460 and 478 A profuse variety of decorative sculpture, intricately carved columns and carved reliefs are found, including exquisitely carved cornices and pilaster. Skilled artisans crafted living rock to imitate timbered wood (such as lintels) in construction and grain and intricate decorative carving, although such architectural elements were ornamental and not functional in the classical sense.

Later many Hindu kings from southern India patronize many cave temples dedicated to Hindu gods and goddesses. One such prominent example of cave temple architecture are

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the Badami Cave Temples at Badami, the early Chalukya capital, carved out in the 6th century. There are four cave temples hewn from the sides of cliffs, three Hindu and one Jain, that contain carved architectural elements such as decorative pillars and brackets as well as finely carved sculpture and richly etched ceiling panels. Nearby are many small Buddhist cave shrines.

Ajanta Caves

The Ajanta Caves in Aurangabad district of Maharashtra state of India are about 30 rock-cut Buddhist cave monuments which date from the 2nd century BCE to about 480 or 650 CE. The caves include paintings and sculptures described by the government Archaeological Survey of India as "the finest surviving examples of Indian art, particularly painting", which are masterpieces of Buddhist religious art, with figures of the Buddha and depictions of the Jataka tales. The caves were built in two phases starting around the 2nd century BCE, with the second group of caves built around 400–650 CE according to older accounts, or all in a brief period of 460 to 480 according to the recent proposals of Walter M. Spink. The site is a protected monument in the care of the Archaeological Survey of India, and since 1983, the Ajanta Caves have been a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

With the Ellora Caves, Ajanta is the major tourist attraction of the Marathwada region of Maharashtra. About 59 kilometres (37 miles) from Jalgaon railway station on the Delhi – Mumbai line and Howrah-Nagpur-Mumbai line of the Central Railway zone, and 104 kilometres (65 miles) from the city of Aurangabad. They are 100 kilometres (62 miles) from the Ellora Caves, which contain Hindu and Jain temples as well as Buddhist caves, the last dating from a period similar to Ajanta. The Ajanta caves are cut into the side of a cliff that is on the south side of a U-shaped gorge on the small river Waghur, and although they are now along and above a modern pathway running across the cliff they were originally reached by individual stairs or ladders from the side of the river 10–35 m (30–110 ft) below.

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The area was previously heavily forested, and after the site ceased to be used the caves were covered by jungle until accidentally rediscovered in 1819 by a British officer on a hunting party. They are Buddhist monastic buildings, apparently representing a number of distinct "monasteries" or colleges. The caves are numbered 1 to 28 according to their place along the path, beginning at the entrance. Several are unfinished and some barely begun and others are small shrines, included in the traditional numbering as e.g. "9A"; "Cave 15A" was still hidden under rubble when the numbering was done. Further round the gorge are a number of waterfalls, which when the river is high are audible from outside the caves.

The caves form the largest corpus of early Indian wall-painting; other survivals from the area of modern India are very few, though they are related to 5th-century paintings at Sigiriya in Sri Lanka. The elaborate architectural carving in many caves is also very rare, and the style of the many figure sculptures is highly local, found only at a few nearby contemporary sites, although the Ajanta tradition can be related to the later Hindu Ellora Caves and other sites.

History

Like the other ancient Buddhist monasteries, Ajanta had a large emphasis on teaching, and was divided into several different caves for living, education and worship, under a central direction. Monks were probably assigned to specific caves for living. The layout reflects this organizational structure, with most of the caves only connected through the exterior. The 7th-century travelling Chinese scholar Xuanzang informs us that Dignaga, a celebrated Buddhist philosopher and controversialist, author of well-known books on logic, lived at Ajanta in the 5th century. In its prime the settlement would have accommodated several hundred teachers and pupils. Many monks who had finished their first training may have returned to Ajanta during the monsoon season from an itinerant lifestyle.

The caves are generally agreed to have been made in two distinct periods, separated by several centuries.

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Caves of the first (Satavahana) period

The earliest group of caves consists of caves 9, 10, 12, 13 and 15A. According to Walter Spink, they were made during the period 100 BCE to 100 CE, probably under the patronage of the Satavahana dynasty (230 BCE – c. 220 CE) who ruled the region. Other datings prefer the period of the mauryan dynasty (300 BCE to 100 BCE), though the grouping of the earlier caves is generally agreed. More early caves may have vanished through later excavations. Of these, caves 9 and 10 are stupa halls of chaitya-griha form, and caves 12, 13, and 15A are vihâras (see the architecture section below for descriptions of these types). The first phase is still often called the Hinayâna phase, as it originated when, using traditional terminology, the Hinayâna or Lesser Vehicle tradition of Buddhism was dominant, when the Buddha was revered symbolically. However the use of the term Hinayana for this period of Buddhism is now deprecated by historians; equally the caves of the second period are now mostly dated too early to be properly called Mahayana, and do not yet show the full expanded cast of supernatural beings characteristic of that phase of Buddhist art. The first Satavahana period caves lacked figurative sculpture, emphasizing the stupa instead, and in the caves of the second period the overwhelming majority of images represent the Buddha alone, or narrative scenes of his lives.

Spink believes that some time after the Satavahana period caves were made the site was abandoned for a considerable period until the mid-5th century, probably because the region had turned mainly Hindu

Caves of the later, or Vâkâmaka, period

The second phase began in the 5th century. For a long time it was thought that the later caves were made over a long period from the 4th to the 7th centuries CE, but in recent decades a series of studies by the leading expert on the caves, Walter M. Spink, have argued that most of the work took place over the very brief period from 460 to 480 CE, during the reign of Emperor Harishena of the Vâkâmaka dynasty.

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This view has been criticized by some scholars, but is now broadly accepted by most authors of general books on Indian art, for example Huntington and Harle.

The second phase is still often called the Mahâyâna or Greater Vehicle phase, but scholars now tend to avoid this nomenclature because of the problems that have surfaced regarding our understanding of Mahâyâna.

Some 20 cave temples were simultaneously created, for the most part viharas with a sanctuary at the back. The most elaborate caves were produced in this period, which included some "modernization" of earlier caves. Spink claims that it is possible to establish dating for this period with a very high level of precision; a fuller account of his chronology is given below. Although debate continues, Spink's ideas are increasingly widely accepted, at least in their broad conclusions. The Archaeological Survey of India website still presents the traditional dating: "The second phase of paintings started around 5th – 6th centuries A.D. and continued for the next two centuries". Caves of the second period are 1–8, 11, 14–29, some possibly extensions of earlier caves. Caves 19, 26, and 29 are chaitya-grihas, the rest viharas.

According to Spink, the Ajanta Caves appear to have been abandoned by wealthy patrons shortly after the fall of Harishena, in about 480 CE. They were then gradually abandoned and forgotten. During the intervening centuries, the jungle grew back and the caves were hidden, unvisited and undisturbed, although the local population were aware of at least some of them.

Rediscovery

On 28 April 1819, a British officer for the Madras Presidency, John Smith, of the 28th Cavalry, while hunting tiger, accidentally discovered the entrance to Cave No. 10 deep within the tangled undergrowth. There were local people already using the caves for prayers with a small fire, when he arrived. Exploring that first cave, long since a home to nothing more than birds and bats and a lair for other larger animals, Captain Smith vandalized the wall by scratching his name and

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the date, April 1819, over the body of a bodhisattva. Since he stood on a five-foot high pile of rubble collected over the years, the inscription is well above the eye-level gaze of an adult today. A paper on the caves by William Erskine was read to the Bombay Literary Society in 1822.

Within a few decades, the caves became famous for their "exotic" setting, impressive architecture, and above all their exceptional, all but unique paintings. A number of large projects to copy the paintings were made in the century after rediscovery, covered below. In 1848 the Royal Asiatic Society established the "Bombay Cave Temple Commission" to clear, tidy and record the most important rock-cut sites in the Bombay Presidency, with John Wilson as president. In 1861 this became the nucleus of the new Archaeological Survey of India.

The Ajanta site was in the territory of the princely state of the Nizam of Hyderabad rather than British India, and Ghulam Yazdani (1885-1962), who founded the archaeology department of the State of Hyderabad in 1914 and ran it for over 30 years, played a considerable role in conserving and researching the site, and publishing a series of monographs on it. Until the Nizam's government built the modern path between the caves, among other efforts to make the site easy to visit, a trip to Ajanta was a considerable adventure, and contemporary accounts dwell with relish on the dangers from falls off narrow ledges, animals and the Bhil people, who were armed with bows and arrows and had a fearsome reputation.

Today, fairly easily combined with Ellora in a single trip, the caves are the most popular tourist destination in Maharashtra, and are often crowded at holiday times, increasing the threat to the caves, especially the paintings. In 2012, the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation announced plans to add to the ASI visitor centre at the entrance complete replicas of caves 1, 2, 16 & 17 to reduce crowding in the originals, and enable visitors to receive a better visual idea of the paintings, which are dimly-lit and hard to read in the caves. Figures for the year to March 2010 showed a total of 390,000 visitors to the site, divided into 362,000 domestic

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and 27,000 foreign. The trends over the previous few years show a considerable growth in domestic visitors, but a decline in foreign ones; the year to 2010 was the first in which foreign visitors to Ellora exceeded those to Ajanta.

Paintings

Mural paintings survive from both the earlier and later groups of caves. Several fragments of murals preserved from the earlier caves (Caves 9 and 11) are effectively unique survivals of court-led painting in India from this period, and "show that by Sâtavâhana times, if not earlier, the Indian painter had mastered an easy and fluent naturalistic style, dealing with large groups of people in a manner comparable to the reliefs of the Sâñcî toraòa crossbars".

Four of the later caves have large and relatively well-preserved mural paintings which "have come to represent Indian mural painting to the non-specialist", and fall into two stylistic groups, with the most famous in Caves 16 and 17, and apparently later paintings in Caves 1 and 2. The latter group were thought to be a century or more later than the others, but the revised chronology proposed by Spink would place them much closer to the earlier group, perhaps contemporary with it in a more progressive style, or one reflecting a team from a different region. The paintings are in "dry fresco", painted on top of a dry plaster surface rather than into wet plaster.

All the paintings appear to be the work of painters at least as used to decorating palaces as temples, and show a familiarity with and interest in details of the life of a wealthy court. We know from literary sources that painting was widely practised and appreciated in the courts of the Gupta period. Unlike much Indian painting, compositions are not laid out in horizontal compartments like a frieze, but show large scenes spreading in all directions from a single figure or group at the centre. The ceilings are also painted with sophisticated and elaborate decorative motifs, many derived from sculpture. The paintings in cave 1, which according to Spink was commissioned by Harisena himself, concentrate on those Jataka

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tales which show previous lives of the Buddha as a king, rather than as an animal or human commoner, and so show settings from contemporary palace life.

In general the later caves seem to have been painted on finished areas as excavating work continued elsewhere in the cave, as shown in caves 2 and 16 in particular. According to Spink's account of the chronology of the caves, the abandonment of work in 478 after a brief busy period accounts for the absence of painting in places including cave 4 and the shrine of cave 17, the later being plastered in preparation for paintings that were never done.

Copies

The paintings have deteriorated significantly since they were rediscovered, and a number of 19th-century copies and drawings are important for a complete understanding of the works. However, the earliest projects to copy the paintings were plagued by bad fortune. In 1846, Major Robert Gill, an Army officer from Madras Presidency and a painter, was appointed by the Royal Asiatic Society through the offices of James Fergusson to make copies of the frescoes on the cave walls, which were increasingly subject to damage by visitors. Gill worked on his painting at the site from 1844 to 1863 (though he continued to be based there until his death in 1875, writing books and photographing) and made 27 copies of large sections of murals, but all but four were destroyed in a fire at the Crystal Palace in London in 1866, where they were on display. Undeterred, he returned to the site, and recommenced his labours, replicating the murals until his death in 1875.

Another attempt was made in 1872 when the Bombay Presidency commissioned John Griffiths, then principal of the Bombay School of Art, to work with his students to make new copies, again for shipping to England. They worked on this for thirteen years and some 300 canvases were produced, many of which were displayed at the Imperial Institute on Exhibition Road in London, one of the forerunners of the Victoria and Albert Museum. But in 1885 another fire destroyed over a hundred of the paintings in storage in a

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wing of the museum. The V&A still has 166 paintings surviving from both sets, though none have been on permanent display since 1955. The largest are some 3 × 6 metres. A conservation project was undertaken on about half of them in 2006, also involving the University of Northumbria. Griffith and his students had unfortunately painted many of the paintings with "cheap varnish" in order to make them easier to see, which has added to the deterioration of the originals, as has, according to Spink and others, recent cleaning by the ASI.

A further set of copies were made between 1909 and 1911 by Christiana Herringham (Lady Herringham) and a group of students from the Calcutta School of Art that included the future Indian Modernist painter Nandalal Bose. The copies were published in full colour as the first publication of London's fledgling India Society. More than the earlier copies, these aimed to fill in holes and damage to recreate the original condition rather than record the state of the paintings as she was seeing them. According to one writer, unlike the paintings created by her predecessors Griffiths and Gill, whose copies were influenced by British Victorian styles of painting, those of the Herringham expedition preferred an 'Indian Renascence' aesthetic of the type pioneered by Abanindranath Tagore.

Early photographic surveys were made by Robert Gill, who learnt to use a camera from about 1856, and whose photos, including some using stereoscopy, were used in books by him and Fergusson (many are available online from the British Library), then Victor Goloubew in 1911 and E.L. Vassey, who took the photos in the four volume study of the caves by Ghulam Yazdani (published 1930–1955).

A final attempt to make copies of the murals was made by the Japanese artist Arai Kampô (Rƒ•NÛ[¹e:1878-1945ÿ who encountered them after being invited by Rabindranath Tagore to India to teach Japanese painting techniques. He worked on making copies with tracings on Japanese paper from 1916 to 1918 and his work was conserved at Tokyo Imperial University until the materials perished during the 1923 Great Kantô earthquake.

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Architecture

The buddhist caves have the most intense and complicated architecture compared to the other caves. The majority of the caves are vihara halls for prayer and living, which are typically rectangular with small square dormitory cells cut into the walls, and by the second period a shrine or sanctuary at the rear centred on a large statue of the Buddha, also carved from the living rock. This change reflects the movement from Hinayana to Mahâyâna Buddhism. These caves are often called monasteries. The other type of main hall is the narrower and higher chaitya hall with a stupa as the focus at the far end, and a narrow aisle around the walls, behind a range of pillars placed close together. Other plainer rooms were for sleeping and other activities. Some of the caves have elaborate carved entrances, some with large windows over the door to admit light. There is often a colonnaded porch or verandah, with another space inside the doors running the width of the cave.

The central square space of the interior of the viharas is defined by square columns forming a more or less square open area. Outside this are long rectangular aisles on each side, forming a kind of cloister. Along the side and rear walls are a number of small cells entered by a narrow doorway; these are roughly square, and have small niches on their back walls. Originally they had wooden doors. The centre of the rear wall has a larger shrine-room behind, containing a large Buddha statue. The viharas of the earlier period are much simpler, and lack shrines. Spink in fact places the change to a design with a shrine to the middle of the second period, with many caves being adapted to add a shrine in mid-excavation, or after the original phase.

The plan of Cave 1 (right) shows one of the largest viharas, but is fairly typical of the later group. Many others, such as Cave 16, lack the vestibule to the shrine, which leads straight off the main hall. Cave 6 is two viharas, one above the other, connected by internal stairs, with sanctuaries on both levels.

The four completed chaitya halls are caves 9 and 10 from the early period, and caves 19 and 26 from the later period of construction. All follow the typical form found elsewhere, with

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high ceilings and a central "nave" leading to the stupa, which is near the back, but allows walking behind it, as walking around stupas was (and remains) a common element of Buddhist worship (pradakshina). The later two have high ribbed roofs, which reflect timber forms, and the earlier two are thought to have used actual timber ribs, which have now perished. The two later halls have a rather unusual arrangement (also found in Cave 10 at Ellora) where the stupa is fronted by a large relief sculpture of the Buddha, standing in Cave 19 and seated in Cave 26. Cave 29 is a late and very incomplete chaitya hall.

The form of columns in the work of the first period is very plain and un-embellished, with both chaitya halls using simple octagonal columns, which were painted with figures. In the second period columns were far more varied and inventive, often changing profile over their height, and with elaborate carved capitals, often spreading wide. Many columns are carved over all their surface, some fluted and others carved with decoration all over, as in cave 1 (illustrated left).

The flood basalt rock of the cliff, part of the Deccan Traps formed by successive volcanic eruptions at the end of the Cretaceous, is layered horizontally, and somewhat variable in quality, so the excavators had to amend their plans in places, and in places there have been collapses in the intervening centuries, as with the lost portico to cave 1. Excavation began by cutting a narrow tunnel at roof level, which was expanded downwards and outwards; the half-built vihara cave 24 shows the method. Spink believes that for the first caves of the second period the excavators had to relearn skills and techniques that had been lost in the centuries since the first period, which were then transmitted to be used at later rock-cut sites in the region, such as Ellora, and the Elephanta, Bagh, Badami and Aurangabad Caves.

The caves from the first period seem to have been paid for by a number of different patrons, with several inscriptions recording the donation of particular portions of a single cave, but according to Spink the later caves were each commissioned as a complete unit by a single patron from the local rulers or

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their court elites. After the death of Harisena smaller donors got their chance to add small "shrinelets" between the caves or add statues to existing caves, and some two hundred of these "intrusive" additions were made in sculpture, with a further number of intrusive paintings, up to three hundred in cave 10 alone.

A grand gateway to the site, at the apex of the gorge's horseshoe between caves 15 and 16, was approached from the river, and is decorated with elephants on either side and a nâga, or protective snake deity.

ICONOGRAPHY OF THE CAVES

In the pre-Christian era, the Buddha was represented symbolically, in the form of the stupa. Thus, halls were made with stupas to venerate the Buddha. In later periods the images of the Buddha started to be made in coins, relic caskets, relief or loose sculptural forms, etc. However, it took a while for the human representation of the Buddha to appear in Buddhist art. One of the earliest evidences of the Buddha's human representations are found at Buddhist archaeological sites, such as Goli, Nagarjunakonda, and Amaravati. The monasteries of those sites were built in less durable media, such as wood, brick, and stone. As far as the genre of rock-cut architecture is concerned it took many centuries for the Buddha image to be depicted. Nobody knows for sure at which rock-cut cave site the first image of the Buddha was depicted.

Current research indicates that Buddha images in a portable form, made of wood or stone, were introduced, for the first time, at Kanheri, to be followed soon at Ajanta Cave 8 (Dhavalikar, Jadhav, Spink, Singh). While the Kanheri example dates to 4th or 5th century CE, the Ajanta example has been dated to c. 462–478 CE (Spink). None of the rock-cut monasteries prior to these dates, and other than these examples, show any Buddha image although hundreds of rock-cut caves were made throughout India during the first few centuries CE. And, in those caves, it is the stupa that is the object of veneration, not the image. Images of the Buddha are not found in Buddhist sailagrhas (rock-cut complexes) until

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the times of the Kanheri (4th–5th century CE) and Ajanta examples (c. 462–478 CE).

The caves of the second period, now all dated to the 5th century, were typically described as "Mahayana", but do not show the features associated with later Mahayana Buddhism. Although the beginnings of Mahâyâna teachings go back to the 1st century there is little art and archaeological evidence to suggest that it became a mainstream cult for several centuries. In Mahayana it is not Gautama Buddha but the Bodhisattva who is important, including "deity" Bodhisattva like Manjushri and Tara, as well as aspects of the Buddha such as Aksobhya, and Amitabha. Except for a few Bodhisattva, these are not depicted at Ajanta, where the Buddha remains the dominant figure. Even the Bodhisattva images of Ajanta are never central objects of worship, but are always shown as attendants of the Buddha in the shrine. If a Bodhisattva is shown in isolation, as in the Astabhaya scenes, these were done in the very last years of activities at Ajanta, and are mostly 'intrusive' in nature, meaning that they were not planned by the original patrons, and were added by new donors after the original patrons had suddenly abandoned the region in the wake of Emperor Harisena's death.

The contrast between iconic and aniconic representations, that is, the stupa on one hand and the image of the Buddha on the other, is now being seen as a construct of the modern scholar rather than a reality of the past. The second phase of Ajanta shows that the stupa and image coincided together. If the entire corpus of the art of Ajanta including sculpture, iconography, architecture, epigraphy, and painting are analysed afresh it will become clear that there was no duality between the symbolic and human forms of the Buddha, as far as the 5th-century phase of Ajanta is concerned. That is why most current scholars tend to avoid the terms 'Hinayana' and 'Mahayana' in the context of Ajanta. They now prefer to call the second phase by the ruling dynasty, as the Vâkâþaka phase.

Badami cave temples

The Badami cave temples are a complex of four Hindu, Jain and possibly Buddhist cave temples located in Badami, a

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town in the Bagalkot district in northern part of Karnataka, India. The caves are considered an example of Indian rock-cut architecture, especially Badami Chalukya architecture, which dates from the 6th century. Badami was previously known as Vataapi Badami, the capital of the early Chalukya dynasty, which ruled much of Karnataka from the 6th to the 8th century. Badami is situated on the west bank of an artificial lake ringed by an earthen wall with stone steps; it is surrounded on the north and south by forts built in later times.

The Badami cave temples represent some of the earliest known examples of Hindu temples. UNESCO has described the designs of the Badami cave temples, and those in Aihole, as having transformed the Malaprabha River valley into a cradle of temple architecture that defined the components of later Hindu temples elsewhere in India.

Caves 1 to 4 are in the escarpment of the hill in soft Badami sandstone formation, to the south-east of the town. In Cave 1, among various sculptures of Hindu divinities and themes, a prominent carving is of the Tandava-dancing Shiva as Nataraja. Cave 2 is mostly similar to Cave 1 in terms of its layout and dimensions, featuring Hindu subjects of which the relief of Vishnu as Trivikrama is the largest. The largest cave is Cave 3, featuring Vishnu-related mythology, and it is also the most intricately carved cave in the complex. Cave 4 is dedicated to revered figures of Jainism. Cave 5 may be a Buddhist cave. Another cave was discovered in 2015, about 500 metres (1,600 ft) from the four main caves, with 27 Hindu carvings.

The Badami cave temples are located in the town of Badami in the north-central part of Karnataka, India. The temples are about 70 miles (110 km) north-east of Hubli-Dharwad, the second-largest metropolitan area of the state. The Malaprabha River is 3 miles (4.8 km) away. Badami, also referred to as Vatapi, Vatapipuri and Vatapinagari in historical texts, the capital of Chalukya dynasty in the 6th century, is at the exit point of a ravine between two steep mountain cliffs. Four cave temples in the escarpment of the hill to the south-east of the town have been excavated. The escarpment is above an

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artificial lake called Agastya Lake that is created by an earthen dam faced with stone steps. To the west end of this cliff, at its lowest point, is the first cave temple. The largest cave is Cave 3, which is further to the east on the northern face of the hill. The fourth cave, Cave 4, is a short distance away.

History

The cave temples, numbered 1 to 4 in the order of their creation, in the town of Badami – the capital city of the Chalukya kingdom (also known as Early Chalukyas) – are dated from the late 6th century onwards. The exact dating is known only for Cave 3, which is a temple dedicated to Vishnu. An inscription found here records the creation of the shrine by Mangalesha in Saka 500 (lunar calendar, 578/579 CE). The inscription, written in the Kannada language, has enabled the dating of these rock cave temples to the 6th century.

The Badami caves complex is part of a UNESCO-designated World Heritage Site candidate under the title "Evolution of Temple Architecture – Aihole-Badami-Pattadakal" in the Malaprabha river valley, considered a cradle of temple architecture that formed the model for later Hindu temples in the region. The artwork in Caves 1 and 2 exhibit the northern Deccan style of the 6th and 7th centuries, while those in Cave 3 simultaneously represent two ancient Indian artistic traditions; the northern Nagara and the southern Dravida styles. Cave 3 also shows icons and reliefs in the Vesara style, a creative fusion of ideas from the two styles, as well as some of the earliest surviving historical examples in Karnataka of yantra-chakra motifs (geometric symbolism) and colored fresco paintings. The first three caves feature sculptures of Hindu icons and legends focusing on Shiva and Vishnu, while Cave 4 features Jain icons and themes.

Temple caves

The Badami cave temples are man-made, all carved out of soft Badami sandstone on a hill cliff. The plan of each of the four caves (1 to 4) includes an entrance with a verandah (mukha mandapa) supported by stone columns and brackets, a

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distinctive feature of these caves, leading to a columned mandapa, or main hall (also maha mandapa), and then to the small, square shrine (sanctum sanctorum, garbhaghrha) cut deep inside the cave. The cave temples are linked by a stepped path with intermediate terraces overlooking the town and lake. The cave temples are labelled 1–4 in their ascending series; this numbering does not reflect the sequence of excavation.

The architecture includes structures built in the Nagara and Dravidian styles, which is the first and most persistent architectural idiom to be adopted by the early chalukyas. There is also a fifth natural cave temple in Badami, a Buddhist temple, a natural cave that can only be entered by crouching on all fours.

Cave 1

Cave 1 is about 59 feet (18 m) above ground level on the north-west part of the hill. Access is through a series of steps that depict carvings of dwarfish ganas (with bovine and equine heads) in different postures. The verandah, with an inner measurement of 70 feet (21 m) by 65 feet (20 m), has four columns sculpted with reliefs of the god Shiva shown in dancing positions and incarnations. The guardian dwarapalas (door keepers) at the entrance to the cave measure 6.166 feet (1.879 m).

The cave portrays the Tandava-dancing Shiva as Nataraja. The image, 5 feet (1.5 m) tall, has 18 arms in a form that expresses the dance positions arranged in a geometric pattern, which Alice Boner – a Swiss art historian and Indologist, says is a time division symbolizing the cosmic wheel. While most of the arms express mudras (symbolic hand gestures), some of the arms hold objects such as drums, a trident and an axe; some also have serpents coiled around them. Shiva has his son Ganesha and the bull Nandi by his side. Adjoining the Nataraja, one wall depicts the goddess Durga, who is depicted slaying the buffalo-demon Mahishasura. Elsewhere, the sons of Shiva, Ganesha and Kartikkeya, the god of war and family deity of the Chalukya dynasty, are seen in one of the carved sculptures on the walls of the cave, with Kartikkeya riding a peacock.

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The cave also has carved sculptures of the goddesses Lakshmi and Parvati flanking Harihara, a 7.75-foot (2.36 m) high sculpture of a fused image that is half-Shiva and half-Vishnu. To the right, toward the end of the wall, is a relief sculpture of Ardhanarishvara, a composite androgynous form of Shiva and his consort Parvati along with a female decorated goddess holding a flat object in her left hand; Nandi, the bull and Bhringi, a devotee of Shiva.

All the figures are adorned with carved ornaments and surrounded by borders with reliefs of animals and birds. The lotus design is a common theme. On the ceiling are images of the Vidyadhara couples. Through a cleft in the back wall of the cave is a square sanctuary with more carved images.

The roof of the cave has five carved panels with the central panel depicting the serpent Shesha. The head and bust are well formed and project boldly from the centre of the coil. In another compartment a bas-relief 2.5 feet (0.76 m) in diameter has carvings of a male and female; the male is Yaksha carrying a sword and the female is Apsara with a flying veil. The succeeding panel has carvings of two small figures and the panel at the end is carved with lotuses.

Cave 2

Cave 2, lying to the west of Cave 3 and facing north, was created in late 6th century. It is almost same as Cave 1 in terms of its layout and dimensions, but it is dedicated primarily to Vishnu. Cave 2 is reached by climbing 64 steps from the first cave. The cave entrance is a verandah divided by four square pillars, which has carvings from its middle section to the top where there are yali brackets with sculptures within them. The cave is adorned with reliefs of guardians. Like Cave 1, the carved cave art is a pantheon of Hindu divinities.

The largest relief in Cave 2 shows Vishnu as Trivikrama (Vamana), with one foot on Earth and another directed to the north. Other representations of Vishnu in this cave include Varaha (a boar) shown rescuing Bhudevi (a symbol of the earth) from the depths of the ocean; and Krishna avatars, legends found in Hindu Puranas texts such as the Bhagavata

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Purana. Like other major murti (forms) in this and other Badami caves, the Varaha sculpture is set in a circle; according to Alice Boner, the panel is an upright rectangle whose "height is equal to the octopartite directing circle and sides are aligned to essential geometric ratios, in this case to the second vertical chord of the circle".

The doorway is framed by pilasters carrying an entablature with three blocks embellished with gavaksha ornament. The entrance of the cave also has two armed guardians holding flowers rather than weapons. The end walls of the outer verandah are adorned with sculpted panels: to the right, Trivikrama and to the left, Varaha rescuing Bhudevi, with a penitent multi-headed snake (Nâga) below. The adjacent side walls and ceiling have traces of colored paint, suggesting the cave used to have fresco paintings. The columns show gods and battle scenes; the churning of the cosmic ocean (Samudra Manthan); Gajalakshmi and figures; Brahma; Vishnu asleep on Shesha; illustrations of the birth of Krishna; Krishna's youth; Krishna with gopis; and cows.

The ceiling of Cave 2 shows a wheel with sixteen fish spokes in a square frame along with swastikas and flying couples. The end bays have a flying couple and Vishnu on Garuda. The main hall in the cave is 33.33 feet (10.16 m) wide, 23.583 feet (7.188 m) deep, and 11.33 feet (3.45 m) high and is supported by eight square pillars in two rows. The roof of this hall has panels filled with bas-relief carvings. At the upper reaches of the wall, a frieze runs all along the wall with engravings of episodes from the Krishna or Vishnu legends.

The sculptures of Cave 2, like Cave 1, are of the northern Deccan style of the 6th and 7th century similar to that found in Ellora caves.

Cave 3

Cave 3 is dedicated to Vishnu; it is the largest and most intricately carved cave in the complex. It has well carved, giant figures of Trivikrama, Anantasayana, Paravasudeva, Bhuvaraha (Varaha), Harihara and Narasimha.Cave 3's primary theme is Vaishnavite, though it also shows Harihara

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on its southern wall – half Vishnu and half Shiva shown fused as one, making the cave important to Shaivism studies.

Cave 3, also facing north, is 60 steps away from Cave 2. Cave 3's temple's verandah is 70 feet (21 m) in length with an interior width of 65 feet (20 m); it has been sculpted 48 feet (15 m) deep into the mountain; an added square shrine at the end extends the cave 12 feet (3.7 m) further inside. The verandah itself is 7 feet (2.1 m) wide and has four free-standing, carved pillars separating it from the hall. The cave is 15 feet (4.6 m) high; it is supported by six pillars, each measuring 2.5 square feet (0.23 m). Each column and pilaster is carved with wide, deep bases crowned with capitals that are partly hidden by brackets on three sides. Each bracket, except for one, has carvings of human figures standing under foliage in different postures, of male and female mythological characters, and an attendant figure of a dwarf. A moulded cornice in the facia, with a dado of blocks below it (generally 7 feet (2.1 m) long), has about thirty compartments carved with series of two fat dwarves called ganas. The cave shows a Kama scene on one pillar, where a woman and a man are inmaithuna (erotic) embrace beneath a tree.

Cave 3 also shows fresco paintings on the ceiling, some of which are faded, broken and unclear. These are among the earliest known surviving evidence of fresco painting in Indian art. The Hindu god Brahma is seen in one of the murals; the wedding of Shiva and Parvati, attended by various Hindu deities, is the theme of another. There is a lotus medallion on the floor underneath the mural of the four-armed Brahma. The sculpture is well preserved, and a large number of Vishnu's reliefs including standing Vishnu with eight arms; Vishnu seated on the hooded serpent Shesha on the eastern side of the verandha; Vishnu as Narasimha (half human, half lion); Varaha fully armed in the back wall of the cave; Harihara (a syncretic sculpture of Vishnu and Shiva); and Trivikrama avatars. The back wall also has carvings of Vidhyadharas holding offerings to Varaha; adjoining this is an inscription dated 579 AD with the name Mangalis inscribed on it.

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At one end of the pilaster is a sculpture of Vamana shown with eight arms (Ashtabhuja); this is decorated with various types of weapons. A crescent moon is crafted above his face and the crown of Vishnu decorates his head. He is flanked by Varaha and two other figures; below on his right is his attendant Garuda. The images in front of Vamana are three figures of Bali and his wife with Shukra, his councillor. Reliefs stand 4 metres (13 ft) tall. Some aspects of the culture and clothing in the 6th century is visible in the art sculpted in this cave. The roof of the verandah has seven panels created by cross beams; each is painted in circular compartments with images of deities including Shiva, Vishnu, Indra, Brahma and Kama, with smaller images of Dikpalas (cardinal guardians) with geometric mosaics filling the gaps at the corners.

The roof of the front aisle has panels with murals in the centre of male and female figurines flying in the clouds; the male figure is yaksha holding a sword and a shield. Decoration of lotus blooms are also seen on the panels. The roof of the hall is divided into nine panels slightly above the level of the ceiling. The central panel here depicts a deva mounted on a ram – conjectured to be Agni. Images of Brahma and Varuna are also painted on the central panels; the floating figures are seen in the remaining panels.

Cave 4

Located to the east of Cave 3, Cave 4 is situated higher than the other caves. It is dedicated to revered figures of Jainism and is the most-recently constructed of the caves. Like the other caves, it features detailed carvings and a diverse range of motifs. The cave has a five-bayed entrance with four square columns – each with brackets and capitals. To the back of this verandah is a hall with two standalone and two joined pillars. The first aisle is a verandah 31 feet (9.4 m) long by 6.5 feet (2.0 m) wide, extending to 16 feet (4.9 m) deep. From the hall, steps lead to the sanctum sanctorum, which is 25.5 feet (7.8 m) wide extends to a depth of 6 feet (1.8 m).

On the back part of this, Mahavira is represented sitting on a lion throne; this figure is flanked by bas-reliefs of

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attendants with chauri (fans), sardulas and makara's heads. The end walls have Parshvanath about 7.5 feet (2.3 m) tall with his head decorated with a multi-headed cobra representing protection and reverence. Carvings include Indrabhuti Gautama covered by four snakes, and Bahubali seen to the left of Gautama with his lower legs surrounded by snakes, together with his daughters Brahmi and Sundari. In the sanctum is an image of Mahavira resting on a pedestal containing a 12th-century Kannada inscription marking the death of one Jakkave. Many Jaina Tirthankara images have been engraved on the inner pillars and walls. In addition there are idols of Yakshas, Yakshis, Padmavati and other Tirthankaras. Most scholars believe Cave 4 was created in the mid-7th century, but some place its creation in the 8th century.

Cave 5

Cave 5 is an as-yet-undated, natural cave of small dimensions that is approached by crawling due to its narrow opening. Inside, there is a carved statue seated over a sculpted throne with reliefs showing people holding chauris (fans), a tree, elephants, and lions in an attacking pose. The face of this statue was reasonably intact until about 1995, it is now damaged and missing parts.

There are several theories as to who the statue represents. One theory holds that it is a relief of the Buddha in a sitting posture. According to this theory, those holding the chauris are Bodhisattvas flanking the Buddha. In the intervening centuries, the cave was converted to a Hindu shrine of Vishnu, as is seen from the white, religious markings painted on the face of the Buddha as the ninth incarnation of Vishnu.According to B.V. Shetti – archaeologist and curator of Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, the cave was not converted but from the start represented a tribute toMayamoha of the Hindu Puranas, or Buddhavatara Vishnu, its style suggesting it was likely carved in or before the 8th century.

A second theory, found in colonial-era texts such as one by John Murray – a missionary in British India and Jainism scholar, say the main image carved in Cave 5 is that of a Jaina

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figure. According to a third theory, by Henry Cousens and A. Sundara – archaeologists, and supported by local legends, the statue is of an ancient king; in a photograph of the statue taken before its face was damaged, the figure lacked the Ushnisha lump that typically goes with Buddha's image. The statue has several unusual, non-Buddha ornaments such as rings for fingers, a necklace and a chest-band; it wears a Hindu Yajnopavita thread and its head is stylistically closer to a Jina head than a Buddha head. These features suggest the statue may be of a king represented with features of various traditions. According to Carol Radcliffe Bolon – Assistant Curator at the Smithsonian Freer Gallery of Art, the date and identity of the main statue in Cave 5 remains enigmatic.

OTHER CAVES

In 2013, Manjunath Sullolli – Assistant Director of Bagalkot district working for the state government of Karnataka, reported the discovery of another cave with 27 rock carvings, about 500 metres (1,600 ft) from the four main caves. Water gushes from this newly discovered cave year round. It depicts Vishnu and other Hindu deities, and features an inscription in the Devanagari script. The dating of these carvings is unknown.

Barabar Caves

The Barabar Caves are the oldest surviving rock-cut caves in India, mostly dating from the Maurya Empire (322–185 BCE), some with Ashokan inscriptions, located in Makhdumpur Block of Jehanabad district, Bihar, India, 24 km north of Gaya.

These caves are situated in the twin hills of Barabar (four caves) and Nagarjuni (three caves) – caves of the 1.6 km distant Nagarjuni Hill sometimes are singled out as Nagarjuni Caves. These rock-cut chambers date back to the 3rd century BCE, Maurya period, of Ashoka (r. 273–232 BCE) and his grandson Dasharatha Maurya. Though Buddhists themselves, they allowed various Jain sects to flourish under a policy of religious tolerance.

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The caves were used by ascetics from the Ajivika sect, founded by Makkhali Gosala, a contemporary of Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, and of Mahavira, the last and 24th Tirthankara of Jainism. Also present at the site are several rock-cut Buddhist and Hindu sculptures.

Most caves at Barabar consist of two chambers, carved entirely out of granite, with a highly polished internal surface and exciting echo effect. The first chamber was meant for worshippers to congregate in a large rectangular hall, and the second, a small, circular, domed chamber for worship, this inner chamber probably had a small stupa like structure, at some point, though they are now empty.

The caves were featured – located in a fictitious Marabar – in the book A Passage to India by English author E. M. Forster. These were also shown in the book The Mahabharata Secret by Indian author Christopher C. Doyle.

Caves at Barabar Hill

Barabar Hill contains four caves, namely, Karan Chaupar, Lomas Rishi, Sudama and Visva Zopri. Sudama and Lomas Rishi Caves are the earliest examples of rock-cut architecture in India, with architectural detailing, made in the Mauryan period, and became a trend the subsequent centuries, like the larger Buddhist Chaitya, that were found in Maharashtra, such as in Ajanta and Karla Caves, and greatly influenced the tradition of South Asian rock-cut architecture. Barabar caves have magnanimous arches which are few in ancient history. Lomas Rishi cave: The arch-like shape facade of Lomas Rishi Caves, imitate the contemporary timber architecture. On the doorway, a row of elephants proceed towards stupa emblems, along the curved architrave.

- Sudama cave: This cave was dedicated by Mauryan Emperor, Ashoka in 261 BCE. The arches of Sudama cave are of bow shape. The caves consist of a circular vaulted chamber with a rectangular mandapa.
- Karan Chaupar (Karna Chaupar): Consists of single rectangular room with polished surfaces, contains inscription which could be dated to 245 BCE.

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- Visva Zopri: Reachable by Ashoka steps hewn in cliff, consists of two rectangular rooms.

Nagarjuni Caves

Nearby caves of Nagarjuna are smaller and younger than Barabar caves The three caves are:

- Gopi (Gopi-ka-Kubha): According to inscription, devoted by the king Dasharatha to Ajivika followers circa 232 BCE.
- Vadithi-ka-Kubha cave (Vedathika Kubha): Located in crevice.
- Vapiya-ka-Kubha cave (Mirza Mandi): Also devoted to Ajivika followers by Dasharatha.

Monolithic rock-cut temples

The Pallava architects started the carving of rock for the creation of a monolithic copies of structural temples. A feature of the rock-cut cave temple distribution until the time of the early Pallavas is that they did not move further south than Aragandanallur, with the solitary exception of Tiruchitrapalli on the south bank of the Kaveri River, the traditional southern boundary between north and south. Also, good granite exposures for rock-cut structures were generally not available south of the river.

Artisans and craftsmen carve a rock cut temple from a large rock, excavating and cutting it to imitate a wooden or masonry temple with wall decorations and works of art. Pancha Rathas provides an example of monolith Indian rock cut architecture dating from the late seventh century located at Mamallapuram, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Ellora cave temple 16, the Kailash Temple, provides a singular example, excavated from the top down rather than by the usual practice of carving into the scarp of a hillside. Artisans crafted the Kailash Temple through a single, huge top-down excavation 100 feet deep down into the volcanic basaltic cliff rock. King Krishna I commissioned the temple in eighth century, requiring more than 100 years to complete. The Kailash Temple, known as cave 16 at Ellora Caves located at Maharastra on the Deccan Plateau, constitutes a huge monolithic temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. Thirty four caves

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have been built at the site, but the other thirty three caves, Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain, had been carved into the side of the plateau rock. The Kailash Temple gives the effect of a free-standing temple surrounded by smaller cave shrines carved out of the same black rock. The Kailash Temple, carved with figures of gods and goddesses from the Hindu Puranas, along with mystical beings like the heavenly nymphs and musicians and figures of good fortune and fertility. Ellora Caves is also a World Heritage Site.

Free-standing Temples

Rock-cut temples and free-standing temples built with cut stone had been developed at the same time. The building of free-standing structures began in fifth century, while rock cut temples continued under excavation until the twelfth century. The Shore Temple serves as an example of a free-standing structural temple, with its slender tower, built on the shore of the Bay of Bengal. Its finely carved granite rocks cut like bricks, dating from the 8th century, belongs with the Group of Monuments at the Mahabalipuram UNESCO World Heritage Site

Cave and temples examples

- Aihole has one Jaina and one Brahmanical temple.
- Badami Cave Temples
- Ellora Caves has twelve Buddhist, 17 Hindu and five Jain temples.
- Kanheri Caves
- Mahabalipuram
- Pancha Rathas
- Shore Temple—structural
- Undavalli caves

Varaha Cave Temple at Mamallapuram

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9

Hoysala architecture

Hoysala architecture is the building style developed under the rule of the Hoysala Empire between the 11th and 14th centuries, in the region known today as Karnataka, a state of India. Hoysala influence was at its peak in the 13th century, when it dominated the Southern Deccan Plateau region. Large and small temples built during this era remain as examples of the Hoysala architectural style, including the Chennakesava Temple atBelur, the Hoysaleswara Temple at Halebidu, and the Kesava Temple at Somanathapura. Other examples of Hoysala craftsmanship are the temples at Belavadi, Amruthapura, Hosaholalu, Mosale, Arasikere, Basaralu, Kikkeri and Nuggehalli. Study of the Hoysala architectural style has revealed a negligible Indo-Aryan influence while the impact of Southern Indian style is more distinct.

Temples built prior to Hoysala independence in the mid-12th century reflect significant Western Chalukya influences, while later temples retain some features salient to Chalukyan art but have additional inventive decoration and ornamentation, features unique to Hoysala artisans. Some three hundred temples are known to survive in present-day Karnataka state and many more are mentioned in inscriptions, though only about seventy have been documented. The greatest concentration of these are in the Malnad (hill) districts, the native home of the Hoysala kings.

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The Karnata Dravida tradition which covers a period of about seven centuries began in the 7th century under the patronage of the Chalukya dynasty of Badami, developed further under the Rashtrakutas of Manyakhetaduring the 9th and 10th centuries and the Western Chalukyas (or Later Chalukyas) of Basavakalyan in the 11th and 12th centuries. Its final development stage and transformation into an independent style was during the rule of the Hoysalas in the 12th and 13th centuries. Medieval inscriptions displayed prominently at temple locations give information about donations made toward the maintenance of the temple, details of consecration and on occasion, even architectural details.

TEMPLE DEITIES

Vishnu with Lakshmi (Lakshminarayana) at Halebidu

Shiva, Parvati, Nandi at Halebidu

Hinduism is a combination of secular and sacred beliefs, rituals, daily practices and traditions that has evolved over the course of over two thousand years and embodies complex symbolism combining the natural world with philosophy. Hindu temples began as simple shrines housing a deity and by the time of the Hoysalas had evolved into well articulated edifices in which worshippers sought transcendence of the daily world. Hoysala temples were not limited to any specific organised tradition of Hinduism and encouraged pilgrims of different Hindu devotional movements. The Hoysalas usually dedicated their temples to Shiva or to Vishnu (two of the popular Hindu gods), but they occasionally built some temples dedicated to the Jain faith as well. Worshippers of Shiva are called Shaivas and worshippers of Vishnu are called Vaishnavas. While King Vishnuvardhana and his descendants were Vaishnava by faith, records show that the Hoysalas maintained religious harmony by building as many temples dedicated to Shiva as they did to Vishnu. Most of these temples have secular features with broad themes depicted in their sculptures. This can be seen in the famous Chennakesava

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Temple at Belur dedicated to Vishnu and in the Hoysaleswara temple at Halebidu dedicated to Shiva. The Kesava temple at Somanathapura is different in that its ornamentation is strictly Vaishnavan. Generally Vaishnava temples are dedicated to Keshava (or to Chennakeshava, meaning "Beautiful Vishnu") while a small number are dedicated to Lakshminarayana and Lakshminarasimha (Narayana and Narasimha both being Avatars, or physical manifestations, of Vishnu) with Lakshmi, consort of Vishnu, seated at his feet. Temples dedicated to Vishnu are always named after the deity. The Shaiva temples have a Shiva linga, symbol of fertility and the universal symbol of Shiva, in the shrine. The names of Shiva temples can end with the suffix eshwara meaning "Lord of". The name "Hoysaleswara", for instance, means "Lord of Hoysala". The temple can also be named after the devotee who commissioned the construction of the temple, an example being the Bucesvara temple at Koravangala, named after the devotee Buci. The most striking sculptural decorations are the horizontal rows of moldings with detailed relief, and intricately carved images of gods, goddesses and their attendants on the outer temple wall panels.

The Doddagaddavalli Lakshmi Devi ("Goddess of Wealth") Temple is an exception as it is dedicated to neither Vishnu nor Shiva. The defeat of the Jain Western Ganga Dynasty (of present-day south Karnataka) by the Cholas in the early 11th century and the rising numbers of followers of Vaishnava Hinduism and Virashaivism in the 12th century was mirrored by a decreased interest in Jainism. However, two notable locations of Jain worship in the Hoysala territory were Shravanabelagola and Kambadahalli. The Hoysalas built Jain temples to satisfy the needs of its Jain population, a few of which have survived in Halebidu containing icons of Jain tirthankaras. They constructed stepped wells called Pushkarni or Kalyani, the ornate tank at Hulikere being an example. The tank has twelve minor shrines containing Hindu deities.

The two main deities found in Hoysala temple sculpture are Shiva and Vishnu in their various forms and avatars (incarnations). Shiva is usually shown with four arms holding

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a trident and a small drum among other emblems that symbolize objects worshiped independently of the divine image with which they are associated. Any male icon portrayed in this way is Shiva although a female icon may sometimes be portrayed with these attributes as Shiva's consort, Parvati. Various depictions of Lord Shiva exist: showing him naked (fully or partially), in action such as slaying a demon (Andhaka) or dancing on the head of a slain elephant (Gajasura) and holding its skin up behind his back. He is often accompanied by his consort Parvati or shown with Nandi the bull. He may be represented as Bhairava, another of Shiva's many manifestations.

A male figure depicted holding certain objects such as a conch (symbol of eternal, heavenly space) and a wheel (eternal time and destructive power) is Vishnu. If a female figure is depicted holding these objects, she is seen as his consort, Lakshmi. In all the depictions Vishnu is holding four objects: a conch, a wheel, a lotus and a mace. These can be held in any of the icon's hands, making possible twenty-four different forms of Vishnu, each with a unique name. Apart from these, Vishnu is depicted in any of his ten avataras, which include Vishnu sitting on Anantha (the celestial snake and keeper of life energy also known as Shesha), Vishnu with Lakshmi seated on his lap (Lakshminarayana), with the head of a lion disemboweling a demon on his lap (Lakshminarasimha), with head of a boar walking over a demon (Varaha), in the Krishna avatar (as Venugopala or the cow herder playing the Venu (flute), dancing on the head of the snake Kaliya, lifting a hill such as Govardhana), with his feet over head of a small figure (Vamana), along with Indra riding an elephant, with Lakshmi seated on Garuda, and the eagle (stealing the parijata tree).

Temple complex

Symmetrical architecture on jagati at Somanathapura

The focus of a temple is the centre or sanctum sanctorum (garbhagriha) where the image of the deity resides, so temple architecture is designed to move the devotee from outside to

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the garbhagriha through ambulatory passageways for circumambulation and halls or chambers (mantapas) that become increasingly sacred as the deity is approached. Hoysala temples have distinct parts that are merged to form a unified organic whole, in contrast to the temples of Tamil country where different parts of a temple stand independently. Although superficially unique, Hoysala temples resemble each other structurally. They are characterised by a complex profusion of sculpture decorating all the temple parts chiseled of soft soapstone (chloritic schist), a good material for intricate carving, executed mostly by local craftsmen, and exhibit architectural features that distinguish them from other temple architectures of South India.

Most Hoysala temples have a plain covered entrance porch supported by lathe turned (circular or bell-shaped) pillars which were sometimes further carved with deep fluting and moulded with decorative motifs. The temples may be built upon a platform raised by about a metre called a "jagati". The jagati, apart from giving a raised look to the temple, serves as a pradakshinapatha or "circumambulation path" for circumambulation around the temple, as the garbagriha (inner sanctum) provides no such feature. Such temples will have an additional set of steps leading to an open mantapa (open hall) with parapet walls. A good example of this style is the Kesava Temple at Somanathapura. The jagati which is in unity with the rest of the temple follows a star-shaped design and the walls of the temple follow a zig-zag pattern, a Hoysala innovation.

Devotees can first complete a ritual circumambulation on the jagati starting from the main entrance by walking in a clockwise direction (towards the left) before entering the mantapa, following the sculptural clockwise-sequenced reliefs on the outer temple walls depicting a sequence of epic scenes from the Hindu epics. Temples that are not built on a jagati can have steps flanked by elephant balustrades (parapets) that lead to the mantapafrom ground level. An example of a temple that does not exhibit the raised platform is the Bucesvara temple in Korvangla, Hassan District. In temples with two

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shrines (dvikuta), the vimanas (the shrines or cellae) may be placed either next to each other or on opposite sides. The Lakshmidevi temple at Doddagaddavalli is unique to Hoysala architecture as it has four shrines around a common center and a fifth shrine within the same complex for the deity Bhairava (a form of Shiva). In addition, four minor shrines exist at each corner of the courtyard (prakaram).

Architectural elements

Mantapa

Ornate bay ceiling in mantapa in the Veera Narayana Temple, Belavadi, a common feature in Hoysala temples

The mantapa is the hall where groups of people gather during prayers. The entrance to the mantapa normally has a highly ornate overhead lintel called a makaratorana (makara is an imaginary beast and torana is an overhead decoration). The open mantapa which serves the purpose of an outer hall (outer mantapa) is a regular feature in larger Hoysala temples leading to an inner small closed mantapa and the shrine(s). The openmantapas which are often spacious have seating areas (asana) made of stone with the mantapa's parapet wall acting as a back rest. The seats may follow the same staggered square shape of the parapet wall. The ceiling here is supported by numerous pillars that create many bays. The shape of the open mantapa is best described as staggered-square and is the style used in most Hoysala temples. Even the smallest open mantapa has 13 bays. The walls have parapets that have half pillars supporting the outer ends of the roof which allow plenty of light making all the sculptural details visible. The mantapa ceiling is generally ornate with sculptures, both mythological and floral. The ceiling consists of deep and domical surfaces and contains sculptural depictions of banana bud motifs and other such decorations. Open Mantapa with shining, lathe-turned pillars at Amrutesvara Temple, Amruthapura

If the temple is small it will consist of only a closed mantapa (enclosed with walls extending all the way to the ceiling) and the shrine. The closed mantapa, well decorated inside and

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out, is larger than the vestibule connecting the shrine and the mantapa and has four lathe-turned pillars to support the ceiling, which may be deeply domed. The four pillars divide the hall into nine bays. The nine bays result in nine decorated ceilings. Pierced stone screens (Jali or Latticework) that serve as windows in the navaranga (hall) and Sabhamantapa (congregation hall) is a characteristic Hoysala stylistic element.

A porch adorns the entrance to a closed mantapa, consisting of an awning supported by two half-pillars (engaged columns) and two parapets, all richly decorated. The closed mantapa is connected to the shrine(s) by a vestibule, a square area that also connects the shrines. Its outer walls are decorated, but as the size the vestibule is not large, this may not be a conspicuous part of the temple. The vestibule also has a short tower called the sukanasi or "nose" upon which is mounted the Hoysala emblem. In Belur and Halebidu, these sculptures are quite large and are placed at all doorways.

The outer and inner mantapa (open and closed) have circular lathe-turned pillars having four brackets at the top. Over each bracket stands sculptured figure(s) called salabhanjika or madanika. The pillars may also exhibit ornamental carvings on the surface and no two pillars are alike. This is how Hoysala art differs from the work of their early overlords, the Western Chalukyas, who added sculptural details to the circular pillar base and left the top plain. The lathe-turned pillars are 16, 32, or 64-pointed; some are bell-shaped and have properties that reflect light. The Parsvanatha Basadi at Halebidu is a good example. According to Brown, the pillars with four monolithic brackets above them carry images of salabhanjikas and madanikas (sculpture of a woman, displaying stylized feminine features). This is a common feature of Chalukya-Hoysala temples. According to Sastri, the shape of the pillar and its capital, the base of which is square and whose shaft is a monolith that is lathe turned to render different shapes, is a "remarkable feature" of Hoysala art.

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Vimana

Star shaped Vimana(shrine) at Hosaholalu

The vimana, also called the cella, contains the most sacred shrine wherein resides the image of the presiding deity. The vimana is often topped by a tower which is quite different on the outside than on the inside. Inside, the vimana is plain and square, whereas outside it is profusely decorated and can be either stellate ("star-shaped") or shaped as a staggered square, or feature a combination of these designs, giving it many projections and recesses that seem to multiply as the light falls on it. Each projection and recess has a complete decorative articulation that is rhythmic and repetitive and composed of blocks and mouldings, obscuring the tower profile. Depending on the number of shrines (and hence on the number of towers), the temples are classified as ekakuta (one), dvikuta (two), trikuta (three), chatushkuta (four) and panchakuta (five). Most Hoysala temples are ekakuta, dvikuta or trikuta, the Vaishnava ones mostly being trikuta. There are cases where a temple is trikuta but has only one tower over the main shrine (in the middle). So the terminology trikuta may not be literally accurate. In temples with multiple disconnected shrines, such as the twin temples at Mosale, all essential parts are duplicated for symmetry and balance.

The highest point of the temple (kalasa) has the shape of a water pot and stands on top of the tower. This portion of the vimana is often lost due to age and has been replaced with a metallic pinnacle. Below the kalasa is a large, highly- sculptured structure resembling a dome which is made from large stones and looks like a helmet. It may be 2 m by 2 m in size and follows the shape of the shrine. Below this structure are domed roofs in a square plan, all of them much smaller and crowned with small kalasas. They are mixed with other small roofs of different shapes and are ornately decorated. The tower of the shrine usually has three or four tiers of rows of decorative roofs while the tower on top of the sukanasi has one less tier, making the tower look like an extension of the main tower

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(Foekema calls it the "nose"). One decorated roof tier runs on top of the wall of a closed mantapa above the heavy eaves of an open mantapa and above the porches.Outer wall panel with six horizontal mouldings at Somanathapura

Below the superstructure of the vimana are temple "eaves" projecting half a meter from the wall. Below the eaves two different decorative schemes may be found, depending on whether a temple was built in the early or the later period of the empire. In the early temples built prior to the 13th century, there is one eave and below this are decorative miniature towers. A panel of Hindu deities and their attendants are below these towers, followed by a set of five different mouldings forming the base of the wall. In the later temples there is a second eave running about a metre below the upper eaves with decorative miniature towers placed between them. The wall images of gods are below the lower eaves, followed by six different mouldings of equal size. This is broadly termed "horizontal treatment". The six mouldings at the base are divided in two sections. Going from the very base of the wall, the first horizontal layer contains a procession of elephants, above which are horsemen and then a band of foliage. The second horizontal section has depictions of the Hindu epics and Puranic scenes executed with detail. Above this are two friezes of yallis or makaras (imaginary beasts) and hamsas (swans). The vimana (tower) is divided into three horizontal sections and is even more ornate than the walls. Madanika bracket at Belur

In Hoysala art Hardy identifies two conspicuous departures from the more austere Western (Later) Chalukya art:ornamental elaboration and a profusion of iconography with figure sculptures, both of which are found in abundance even on the superstructure over the shrine. Their medium, the soft chlorite schist (Soapstone) enabled a virtuoso carving style. Hoysala artists are noted for their attention to sculptural detail be it in the depiction of themes from the Hindu epics and deities or in their use of motifs such as yalli, kirtimukha (gargoyles), aedicula (miniature decorative towers) on pilaster, makara (aquatic monster), birds (hamsa), spiral foliage, animals

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such as lions, elephants and horses, and even general aspects of daily life such as hair styles in vogue.

Salabhanjika, a common form of Hoysala sculpture, is an old Indian tradition going back to Buddhist sculpture. Sala is the sala tree and bhanjika is the chaste maiden. In the Hoysala idiom, madanika figures are decorative objects put at an angle on the outer walls of the temple near the roof so that worshipers circumambulating the temple can view them.

The sthamba buttalikas are pillar images that show traces of Chola art in the Chalukyan touches. Some of the artists working for the Hoysalas may have been from Chola country, a result of the expansion of the empire into Tamil-speaking regions of Southern India. The image of mohini on one of the pillars in the mantapa (closed hall) of the Chennakeshava temple is an example of Chola art.

General life themes are portrayed on wall panels such as the way horses were reined, the type of stirrup used, the depiction of dancers, musicians, instrumentalists, and rows of animals such as lions and elephants (where no two animals are identical). Perhaps no other temple in the country depicts the Ramayana and Mahabharata epics more effectively than the Hoysaleshwara temple at Halebidu.

Erotica was a subject the Hoysala artist handled with discretion. There is no exhibitionism in this, and erotic themes were carved into recesses and niches, generally miniature in form, making them inconspicuous. These erotic representations are associated with the Shakta practice.

Apart from these sculptures, entire sequences from the Hindu epics (commonly the Ramayana and the Mahabharata) have been sculpted in a clockwise direction starting at the main entrance. The right to left sequence is the same direction taken by the devotees in their ritual circumambulation as they wind inward toward the inner sanctum. Depictions from mythology such as the epic hero Arjuna shooting fish, the elephant-headed god Ganesha, the Sun god Surya, the weather and war god Indra, and Brahma with Sarasvati are common. Also frequently seen in these temples is Durga, with several arms holding weapons given to her by other gods, in the act

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of killing a buffalo (a demon in a buffalo's form) and Harihara (a fusion of Shiva and Vishnu) holding a conch, wheel and trident. Many of these friezes were signed by the artisans, the first known instance of signed artwork in India. Kirtimukha decoration (demon faces) on tower at Amrutesvara Temple, Amruthapura

Ornate lintel and door jamb relief at entrance to inner mantapa in the Harihareshwara Temple at Harihar

According to Settar, surveys in modern times have indicated that 1000–1500 structures were built by the Hoysalas, of which about a hundred temples have survived to date. The Hoysala style is an offshoot of the Western Chalukya style, which was popular in the 10th and 11th centuries. It is distinctively Dravidian, and according to Brown, owing to its features, Hoysala architecture qualifies as an independent style. While the Hoysalas introduced innovative features into their architecture, they also borrowed features from earlier builders of Karnata like the Kadambas, Western Chalukyas. These features included the use of chloritic schist or soapstone as a basic building material. Other features were the stepped style of vimana tower called the Kadamba shikhara, which was inherited from the Kadambas. Hoysala sculptors made use of the effect of light and shade on carved walls, which poses a challenge for photography of the temples. The artistry of the Hoysalas in stone has been compared to the finesse of an ivory worker or a goldsmith. The abundance of jewellery worn by the sculpted figures and the variety of hairstyles and headdresses depicted give a fair idea of the lifestyles of the Hoysala times. Elephant balustrades in the Bucesvara temple. A temple plan without jagati at Korvangla

Vasantha mantapa, an ornate 13th century contribution from the Hoysala era to the pre-existingUma-Maheshvara shrine at theBhoga Nandeeshwara Templecomplex, Chikkaballapura district

While medieval Indian artisans preferred to remain anonymous, Hoysala artisans signed their works, which has given researchers details about their lives, families, guilds, etc. Apart from the architects and sculptors, people of other

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guilds such as goldsmiths, ivory carvers, carpenters, and silversmiths also contributed to the completion of temples. The artisans were from diverse geographical backgrounds and included famous locals. Prolific architects included Amarashilpi Jakanachari, a native of Kaidala in Tumkur district, who also built temples for the Western Chalukyas. Ruvari Malithamma built the Kesava Temple at Somanathapura and worked on forty other monuments, including the Amruteshwara temple at Amruthapura. Malithamma specialised in ornamentation, and his works span six decades. His sculptures were typically signed in shorthand as Malli or simply Ma. Dasoja and his son Chavana from Balligavi were the architects of Chennakesava Temple at Belur; Kedaroja was the chief architect of the Hoysaleswara Temple at Halebidu. Their influence is seen in other temples built by the Hoysalas as well. Names of other locals found in inscriptions are Maridamma, Baicoja, Caudaya, Nanjaya and Bama, Malloja, Nadoja, Siddoja, Masanithamma, Chameya and Rameya. Artists from Tamil country included Pallavachari and Cholavachari.

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10

Vijayanagara architecture

Vijayanagara architecture of 1336-1565CE was a notable building idiom that developed during the rule of the imperial Hindu Vijayanagar Empire. The empire ruled South India, from their regal capital at Vijayanagara, on the banks of the Tungabhadra River in modern Karnataka, India. The empire built temples, monuments, palaces and other structures across South India, with a largest concentration in its capital. The monuments in and around Hampi, in the Vijayanagara principality, are listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In addition to building new temples, the empire added new structures and made modifications to hundreds of temples across South India. Some structures at Vijayanagara are from the pre-Vijayanagara period. The Mahakuta hill temples are from the Western Chalukya era. The region around Hampi had been a popular place of worship for centuries before the Vijayanagara period with earliest records dating from 689 CE when it was known as Pampa Tirtha after the local river God Pampa.

There are hundreds of monuments in the core area of the capital city. Of these, 56 are protected by UNESCO, 654 monuments are protected by the government of Karnataka and another 300 await protection.

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SALIENT FEATURES

Vijayanagara architecture can be broadly classified into religious, courtly and civic architecture, as can the associated sculptures and paintings. The Vijayanagara style is a combination of the Chalukya, Hoysala, Pandya and Cholastyles which evolved earlier in the centuries when these empires ruled and is characterised by a return to the simplistic and serene art of the past.

For the approximately 400 years during the rule of the Western Chalukya and the Hoysalas empires, the most popular material for temple construction was chloritic schist or soapstone. This was also true for sculpture as soapstone is soft and easily carved. During the Vijayanagar period the local hard granite was preferred in the Badami Chalukya style, although soapstone was used for a few reliefs and sculptures. While the use of granite reduced the density of sculptured works, granite was a more durable material for the temple structure. Because granite is prone to flaking, few pieces of individual sculptures reached the high levels of quality seen in previous centuries. To cover the unevenness of the stone used in sculptures, artists employed plaster to give the rough surface a smooth finish and then painted it with lively colours.

Temple structures

Vijayanagara temples are usually surrounded by a strong enclosure. Small shrines consist simply of a garbhagriha (sanctum) and a porch. Medium-sized temples have a garbhagriha, shukanasi (antechamber), a navaranga (antrala) connecting the sanctum and outer mandapa (hall), and a rangamantapa (enclosed pillared hall). Large temples have tall Rayagopuram built with wood, brick and stucco in Chola style. The term Raya is added to indicate a gopura built by Vijayanagar Rayas. The top of the gopuram has a shalashikhara resembling a barrel made to rest on its side. Large life-size figures of men, woman, Gods and Goddesses adorn the gopuram. This Tamil dravida-influenced style became popular during the rule of king Krishnadevaraya and is seen in South Indian temples constructed over the next 200 years. Examples

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of Rayagopuram are the Chennakesava Temple in Belur and the temples at Srisailam and Srirangam. In addition to these structures, medium-size temples have a closed circumambulatory (Pradakshinapatha) passage around the sanctum, an open mahamantapa (large hall), a kalyanamantapa (ceremonial hall) and atemple tank to serve the needs of annual celebrations.

Temple pillars often have engravings of charging horses or hippogryphs (Yali) — horses standing on hind legs with their fore legs lifted and riders on their backs. The horses on some pillars stand seven to eight feet tall. On the other side of the pillar are usually carvings from Hindu mythology. Pillars that do not have such hippogryphs are generally rectangular with mythology themed decoration on all sides. Some pillars have a cluster of smaller pillars around a central pillar shaft. The bottom supports of these pillars have engravings of Gods and Goddesses. Carvings of hippogryphs clearly show the adroitness of the artists who created them.

The Mantapas are built on square or polygonal plinths with carved friezes that are four to five feet high and have ornate stepped entrances on all four sides with miniature elephants or with Yali balustrades (parapets). TheMantapas are supported by ornate pillars. The 1,000-pillared style with large halls supported by numerous pillars was popular. The 1,000-pillared Jain basadi at Mudabidri is an example. Larger temples have a separate shrine for the female deity. Some examples of this are the Hazara Rama, Balakrishna and Vitthala temples at Hampi.

Some shrines in the Vitthalapura area inside Vijayanagara were consecrated specifically for Tamil Alwar saints and for the great Vaishnava saint, Ramanujacharya. Architecturally they are different in that each shrine has an image depicting the saint for whose worship the temple was built. Each shrine has its own enclosure and a separate kitchen and pilgrim feeding hall. The water storage tank inside the royal center, the stepped tank called Pushkarni, is a recent archaeological discovery. The stepped tank is fashioned with finished chlorite schist slabs arranged in a symmetrical formation with steps and landings descending to the water on all four sides. This is

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clearly a Western Chalukya-Hoysala style tank and is seen in many parts of present-day Karnataka. The inscriptions on the slabs indicate the material was brought from outside the Vijayanagara area.

Palaces

Much of what is known today of Vijayanagara palaces is drawn from archaeological excavations at Hampi as no royal palace structures have survived. Most palaces stand in their own compound defined by high tapering walls made of stone or layered earth. Palaces are approached through a sequence of courts with passageways and doorways requiring multiple changes in direction. All palaces face east or north. The larger palaces have side extensions giving the complex a symmetrical shape.

Palaces were built on raised platforms made of granite. The platforms have multiple tiers of mouldings with well-decorated friezes. The decorations can be floral, Kirtimukha shapes (demon faces), geese, elephants and occasionally human figures. Pillars, beams and rafters inside the palace were made of wood as evidenced by ash discovered in excavations. The roof was made of brick or lime concrete, while copper and ivory were used for finials. Palaces commonly consisted of multiple levels with each flight of stairs decorated by balustrades on either side, with either yali (imaginary beast) or elephant sculptures. The entrance steps into palaces and temple mantapas were similarly decorated. Water tanks inside the palace complex have decorative water spouts such as the carved torso of the Nandi with a gaping mouth to allow water flow into the tank. Other structures commonly found inside a palace complex are wells and shrines.

The courtly architecture generally show secular styles with Islamic influences. Examples are the Lotus Mahal palace, Elephant stables, and watch towers. Courtly buildings and domed structures were built with mortar mixed with stone rubble.

The impact of this style of architecture was seen well into the 17th century when the successive Nayaka kingdoms

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continued to encourage pillars with hippogryphs and granite became the main building material.

Other famous temples in Karnataka

While the empire is well known for its monuments in the regal capital Vijayanagara (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), it also built temples in other regions of Karnataka including the coastal region (called Karavali) where the Vijayanagara idiom mingled with local styles. A List of these temples and their approximate time of construction is given in the article List of Vijayanagara era temples in Karnataka.

Famous temples in Andhra Pradesh

In Andhra Pradesh the empire built the Mallikarjuna Temple at Srisailam, Upper Narasimha Temple and Lower Narasimha Temple at Ahobilam, Veera Bhadra Temple at Lepakshi and Venkateswara Temple at Tirupati and others. In Tamil Nadu the empire built the Vijayaraghava Permal temple modeled after the famous temples at Tirupati with statues of Krishnadevaraya in Thayar Sanithi pillars facing each other.

Hampi

Hampi (Hampe) is a village and temple town recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, listed as the Group of Monuments at Hampi. in northern Karnataka, India. It was one of the richest and largest cities in the world during its prime. It is located within the ruins of the city of Vijayanagara, the former capital of the Vijayanagara Empire. Predating the city of Vijayanagara, Hampi continues to be an important religious centre, housing the Virupaksha Temple and several other monuments belonging to the old city. According to statistics of 2014, Hampi is the most searched historical place in Karnataka on Google. The empire boasted a massive army comprising close to a million men. In around 1500 AD Vijaynagar had about 500,000 inhabitants (supporting 0.1% of the global population during 1440-1540), making it the second

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largest city in the world after Beijing and almost thrice the size of Paris.

Hampi — traditionally known as Pampa-kshetra, Kishkindha-kshetra or Bhaskara-kshetra — is derived from Pampa, which is the old name of the Tungabhadra River (also Pampa was Lord Bhrumah's daughter, who was later married to Lord Shiva) on whose southern banks the city is built. The name "Hampi" is an anglicized version of the Kannada Hampe (derived from Pampa). Over the years, it has also been referred to as Vijayanagara and Virupakshapura (from Virupaksha, the patron deity of the Vijayanagara rulers).

History

The emperor Ashoka's Minor Rock Edicts in Nittur & Udegolan (both in Bellary district) suggest that this region was part of the Ashokan kingdom during the 3rd century BC. A Brahmi inscription and a terracotta seal dating to the 2nd century CE were also recovered from the excavation site.

The first settlements in Hampi date from 1 CE.

Immediately before the rise of the Vijayanagara kings, the region was probably in the hands of chiefs of Kampili, now a small town, 19 km east of Hampi.

Kampili was said to have been founded by Gayathri Giri of Annar bara. Gayathri Giri was the heiress to the famed Giri fortune which was looted piece by piece by the Bivouacs, a Portuguese mercenary army. Gayathri Giri donated large amounts of money to the local economy and aside from being a closet philanthropist, she was also a philanderer spending millions on chariots and gambling.

Gayathri Giri's biggest contribution to southern India was her penchant for setting up public washrooms and sheds for animals. Ruins of these sheds are still seen in Thanjavur and Rameshwaram. Gayathri Giri was said to be secretly in love with Premla Tapoonia, the queen of Mysore, and the constant rejection by Premla led to Gayathri's eventual demise from a broken heart. Premla moved on to marry Suresha Pallava, the king of Humanavarnam.

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Hampi was one of the best areas of the capital of the Vijayanagara Empire from 1343 to 1565, when it was besieged by the Deccan Muslim confederacy. Hampi was chosen because of its strategic location, bounded by the torrential Tungabhadra river on one side and surrounded by defensible hills on the other three sides.

The ruins of Hampi were discovered by Colonel Colin Mackenzie in 1800.

The site is significant historically and architecturally. The landscape abounds with large stones which have been used to make statues of Jaina deities. The Archaeological Survey of India continues to conduct excavations in the area to search for additional artifacts and temples.

The Islamic Quarter, sometimes called the Moorish Quarter, is located between the northern slope of the Malyavanta hill and the Talarigatta Gate. According to archaeologists, high-ranking Muslim officers of the king's court and military officers lived in this area.

Geography

Hampi is situated on the banks of the Tungabhadra river. It is 353 km from Bangalore and 74 km away from Bellary. Hosapete (Hospet), 13 km away, is the nearest railway head. Guntakal Jn S.C. Railway just 99 km from Guntakal, which is also on the banks of Tunghabhadra, in AP is some 150 km away. The principal industries of the village are agriculture, the support of the Virupaksha temple and some other local holy places in the vicinity, as well as tourism. The annual Hampi Utsav or "Vijaya Festival" celebrated since Vijayanagara reign. It is organized by the Government of Karnataka as Nada Festival.

Due to the presence of several mineral deposits in this region (iron-ore, manganese), mining has been done for a number of years. A recent boom for the supply of iron-ore in the international market has led to increased levels of mining in this district. Some feel that the World Heritage Site at Hampi as well as the Tungabhadra Dam is under threat as a result.

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Architecture

The city of Vijayanagara was originally encompassed by seven lines of fortifications. These fortifications had a large number of bastions and gateways. The seventh & the innermost fortification enclosed the main city and is the best preserved. The extant monuments of Vijayanagara or Hampi can be divided into Religious, Civil & Military buildings. The Jain temples on Hemakuta hill, the two Devi shrines & some other structures in the Virupaksha temple complex predate the Vijayanagara Empire. The earliest amongst them, the Shiva shrines with their stepped pyramidal vimanas or superstructures, date to the early Chalukyan period around ninth-tenth century AD.

Religious buildings

Hampi has various notable Hindu temples with some vedanta theology inside the temples, some of which are still active places of worship. Among the most notable are:

- Achyutaraya Temple
- BadaviLinga : This is the largest Linga image in Hampi. Located next to the Lakshmi Narasimha statue the Linga is housed inside a chamber with an opening in the front. A close look on this icon can reveal three eyes (depicting the three eyes of Shiva) carved on it. Legend has it that this was commissioned by a peasant woman and hence the name (Badva means poor in local tongue).The sanctum in which the Linga is installed is always filled with water as a water channel is made to flow through it. According to Hindu theology the River Ganga (Ganges) was brought from swarga to earth to quench the drought. But the river was so forceful that it could split the earth into two pieces if allowed to fall on earth. Lord Shiva consented to take the impact by allowing the torrent of Ganga to fall on his matted hair. Thus helping to release a smooth flowing river on to earth from his hair. As an iconic representation of this, in Siva temples you can spot a dripping pot hanged over the Linga.

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- Chandramauleshwara Temple
- Malyavanta Raghunathaswamy temple was constructed in the ancient style of architecture, the temple of Malyavanta Raghunathaswamy stands 3 km down the road. Its inner walls flaunt peculiar and ir.teresting motifs of fish and marine creatures.
- Hazara Rama Temple Complex: This ruined temple complex is well known for elaborate frescoes from the Hindu theosophy and a sprawling courtyard well-laid with gardens. It is well known for more than many thousand carvings & inscriptions on & in the temple depicting the mighty story of Ramayana. It has about 1000 carvings & inscriptions depicting the story of Ramayana.
- Jain Temple : Reliefs of Jain temples are present in this area hat includes Hemkut Jain temples, Ratnatraykut, Parsvanath charan and Ganigatti jain temple. Most of the idols are now missing from these temples. Ruins suggest that these temples belong to 14th century.

Krishna Temple Complex: This temple complex has been recently excavated through the last decade, and restoration work is still in progress. The temple has the Sacred Tank or the Pushkarani located on its eastern side.

- Vittala Temple Complex: This is perhaps the most famous and well-known among the ruins of Hampi. The iconic stone chariot in the vicinity of this temple complex is a symbol of Karnataka Tourism. Of late, floodlights have been installed in the temple complex that provide illumination at dusk, thereby adding to the grandeur of the architecture.

The temple houses the famous musical pillars. The British wanted to check the reason behind this wonder and so they had cut two pillars to check if anything was there inside the pillars that was producing the sound. They had found nothing but hollow pillars. Even today we can see those pillars cut by the British.

The road leading to the temple was once a market where the horses were traded. Even today we can see the ruins of

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the market on both the sides of the road. The temple contains the images of foreigners like Persians selling horses.

Lepakshi

Lepakshi is a small village in Mandal in the Anantapur District of Andhra Pradesh, India. It is located 15 km (9.3 mi) east of Hindupur and approximately 120 km (75 mi) north of Bangalore. Lepakshi is culturally and archaeologically significant as it is the location of shrines dedicated to Shiva, Vishnu and Veerabhadra which were built during the Vijayanagara Kings' period (1336–1646). The temples are the location of mural paintings of the Vijayanagar kings and Kannada inscriptions. Near the temple complex is a large granite Nandi bull. On a hillock known as Kurma Saila, "tortoise shaped hill", are other temples to Papanatheswara, Raghunatha, Srirama, and Durga.

Archaeological sites

Veerabhadra Temple

The Veerabhadra temple of Lepakshi, which was built by the brothers Viranna and Virupanna, is dedicated to Veerabhadra. It is an example of the Vijayanagar architectural style. Points of interest in the temple include a rock chain, Vastu Purush, the Padmini race lady, the hanging pillar, Durga Paadam, the eyes of Viroopaakshanna and Lepakshi saree designs. The paintings on the roof are made with natural pigments.

Lepakshi Nandi

The Shiva's bull Nandi is a granite monolithic sculpture on the main road of Lepashki approximately 200m from the temple. It is 4.5m high and 8.23m long making one of the largest nandi in India. The sculpture has been positioned so that it faces the shivalinga which is shielded by a large serpent inside the temple. The nandi wears a kaasu malai, a bell chain, earrings and other jewellery. Legend has it that the Naga of the Nagalinga was carved out of a single stone by sculptors while they waited for their mothers to prepare lunch.

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11

Temple Architecture of Karnataka

The antiquity of Architecture of Karnataka (gift of viswabrahmin) can be traced to its southern Neolithic and early Iron Age, Having witnessed the architectural ideological and utilitarian transformation from shelter- ritual- religion. Here the nomenclature 'Architecture' is as old as c.2000 B.C.E. The upper or late Neolithic people in order to make their shelters, they constructed huts made of wattle and doab, that were buttressed by stone boulders, presumably having conical roof resting on the bamboo or wooden posts into red murram or paved granite chips as revealed in archaeological excavations in sites like Brhamagiri (Chitradurga district), Sanganakallu, Tekkalakota (Bellary district), Piklihal (Raichur district). Megaliths are the dominant archaeological evidence of the early Iron Age (c. 1500 B.C.E- 100 C.E unsettled date). There are more than 2000 early Iron Age burial sites on record, who laid the foundation for a high non perishable architecture in the form of various distinct architectural styles of stone built burials, which are ritualistic in its character. The active religious architecture is evident 345 with that of the Kadamba Dynasty. Karnataka is a state in the southern part of India originally known as the State of Mysore. Over the centuries, architectural monuments within the region displayed a diversity of influences, often relaying much about the artistic

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trends of the rulers of twelve different dynasties. Its architecture ranges dramatically from majestic monolith, such as the Gomateshwara, to Hindu and Jain places of worship, ruins of ancient cities, mausoleums and palaces of different architectural hue. Mysore Kingdom (Wodeyar) rule has also given an architectural master structure in the St. Philomena's Church at Mysore (extolled by the King as a structure of divine compassion and the eager gratitude of men) which was completed in 1956, in addition to many Dravidian style architectural temples. Two of the monuments (Pattadakal and Hampi) are listed under the UNESCO World Heritage List of 22 cultural monuments in India. Styles of Indo-Saracenic, Renaissance, Corinthian, Hindu, Indo-Greek and Indo-British style palaces were built in Mysore, the city of palaces. Sikh architecture at Bidar (1512) and also in Bangalore in 1956 can also be cited as having an impact on the architectural composition of the state.

Apart from the ancient traditional Buddhist Viharas which existed in India since ancient times, since the Independence of India in 1947, Karnataka has experienced some marked architectural changes, notably by the influx of Tibetan refugees which arrived in the state between 1963 and 1997, bringing with them the traditional Tibetan art and architectural styles, reflected in the Buddhist monastery at Bylakuppe for instance. Vidhana Soudha (built in Bangalore in 1953) and the tallest temple at Murudeshwar are witnesses to the Neo–Dravidian architectural influences which have evolved since independence. The chronology of the architecture of Karnataka is elaborated in the right-hand box.

KADAMBA ARCHITECTURE

The Kadambas of Banavasi were the ancient royal dynasty of Karnataka from 345 to 525, and made a significant early contribution to the architectural heritage of Karnataka. Dr. G. M. Moraes opines that apart from using some unique features, the Kadambas incorporated a diversity of styles in their architecture (Kadamba architecture), derived from their predecessors and overlords, drawing upon the architectural

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tradition of the Satavahanas for instance. The Kadambas were the originators of the Karnataka architecture. The most prominent basic feature of their architecture is the Shikara (dome), called Kadamba Shikara. The Shikara is pyramid shaped and rises in steps without any decoration, with a stupika or kalasha at the top. Occasionally the pyramids had perforated screen windows. This style of Shikara was used several centuries later, having an influence on the Doddagaddavalli Hoysala Temple and the Mahakuta temples in Hampi. The Madhukeshwara (Lord Shiva) Temple in Banavasi was built by Kadambas, and has an intricately carved stone cot. Originally built by the Kadambas, it has undergone, over a period of a thousand years, many additions and renovations, from the Chalukyas to the rulers of Sonda. "Kadambotsava", an annual cultural festival is held here in the month of December.

Dravidian architecture

Various temples in the Jaina, Shaiva and Vishnu traditions were built under the Western Ganga Sovereign Dynasty, which was subordinate to Pallava from 350 to 550, under Chalukya overlordship until 753 and under Rashtrakuta overlordship until 1100. The construction of monuments such as Gomateshwara (982 – 983) in places such as Shravanabelagola, Kambadahalli and Talakadu by the Western Ganga kings reflect a tolerance to different faiths. Some Vaishnava temples were built by the Gangas, such as the Narayanaswami temples in Nanjangud, Sattur and Hangala, in the modern Mysore district.

Gomateshwara

Gomateshwara (983), situated in Shravanabelagola is a monolithic statue standing 17.8 metres (58 ft) high above a hill (618 steps climb leads to this monolith), and is visible from a distance of 30 kilometres (19 mi) and regarded as one of the largest monolithic statues in the world. The statue was built by the Ganga minister and commander Chavundaraya (940–989) in honour of Lord Bahubali. Carved from fine-grained

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white granite, the image stands on a lotus. It has no support up to the thighs and is 60 feet (18 m) tall with the face measuring 6.5 feet (2.0 m). With the serene expression on the face of the image, its curled hair with graceful locks, its proportional anatomy, the monolith size, and the combination of its artistry and craftsmanship have led it to be called the mightiest achievement in sculptural art in medieval Karnataka. It is the largest monolithic statue in the world.

Panchakuta basadi (Jain basadi)

Further information: Kambadahalli

This is one of the most elegant monuments built in Dravidian, Vesara and Nagara styles during the period between 900 and 1000. The temple, which is oriented to the north towards the Brahmadeva pillar, has five shrines (hence the name Panchakuta). Three shrines are connected to a mantapa by a vestibule and consist of the main shrine of tirthankara Adinatha flanked by Neminatha shrine to the east and Shanthinatha shrine containing a 3 metres (9.8 ft) tall idol of the tirthankara to the west. The other two shrines, which are disconnected and lie to the north of the trikuta cluster (three shrines), are also dedicated to tirthankaras. These are two different monuments.

Talakad

Talakad is a historical site along the banks of the Cauvery River near Mysore. This small town, with a strong history and a prolonged period of human settlement was a flourishing city during the Hoysala period (12th–13th century), and was also an important trade centre during the reign of Gangas (from the 6th century for about 400 years) and Cholas (close of 10th century) and the Hoysalas from 1116. Towards the early 15th century it came under the Vijayanagara rule, and remained with them until the end of the 16th century. There are about a dozen temples spread over a small area of 4 square kilometres (1.5 sq mi), perhaps reflecting the rich art, culture, trade and human activities that once existed there. The town

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now looks abandoned, except during the time of pilgrimage held once every few years. The temples, whose deities are regularly worshipped, such as the Kirthinarayana Temple, are either uncovered frequently or are protected continuously from accumulation of sand. The sand is removed to uncover them for a specific worship and an important pilgrimage held every five to twelve years; the recent Panchalinga Darshana pilgrimage was held during December 2006.

Nanjangud Temple

The temple, located at Nanjangud on the right bank of the Kabini River, was originally built in Dravidian style by the Ganga Dynasty rulers in the 9th century during their occupation of this region. It has undergone extensions during the reign of Cholas, Hoysalas, and Wodeyars from the 9th to 19th centuries. It is one of the biggest temples in Karnataka with an area of 560 square feet (52 m) and with a Gopura (tower) of 36.576 metres (120.00 ft) height, which has seven stories with seven gold plated Kalasas on top of the Gopura.

The uniqueness of the temple is that it has 66 idols of Shaiva saints called as Nayanmars and more than 100 Lingas (of different kinds and sizes) including the main deity of Srikanteshwara (Nanjundeshwara) Linga. The main deity is also called Hakim Nanjundeswara; a title given by Tippu Sultan. It is inscribed in the temple history that on Tippu Sultan's special prayers to the deity, eyesight of the royal elephant was restored, where after the Sultan had a lingam made of jade along with an emerald necklace and donated it to the temple.

Badami Chalukya architecture

The Badami Chalukya Architecture is a temple building idiom that evolved in the time period of 5th to 8th centuries in the area of Malaprabha basin, in present-day Bagalkot district of Karnataka state, sometimes called the Vesara style and Chalukya style. The earliest temples dating back to around 450 in Aihole when the Badami Chalukyas were feudatories of the Kadambas of Banavasi are also reflected during this

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period. According to historians, the Badami Chalukya contribution to temple building matched their valour and their achievements in battle. Their style included two types of monuments, namely the rock cut halls (caves) or cave temple features and the surface structural monuments.

Cave temples

Cave temple architecture is found in the Badami cave temples at Badami, the early Chalukya capital, carved out in the 6th century. There are four cave temples hewn from the sides of cliffs, three Hindu and one Jain, which contain carved architectural elements such as decorative pillars and brackets as well as finely carved sculpture and richly etched ceiling panels. Nearby are many small Buddhist cave shrines. The four caves are simple in style. The entrance is a simple verandah with stone columns and brackets -a distinctive feature of these caves-leading to a columned mandapa and then to the small square shrine (sanctum sanctorum) cut deep into the cave. The temple caves represent different religious sects. Among them, two are dedicated to Lord Vishnu, one to Lord Shiva and the fourth is a Jain temple. The first three are devoted to the Vedic faith and the fourth cave is the only Jain temple at Badami.

The cave temples architecture is a blend of North Indian Nagara Style and South Indian Dravidian style. Each cave has a sanctum sanctorum, a mandapa, a verandah and pillars. The cave temples also bear exquisite carvings, sculptures and beautiful murals

Dravidian and Rekhanagara style of architecture of Rashtrakutas

The Rashtrakutas who ruled the Deccan from Manyakheta, Gulbarga district, Karnataka in the period 753 – 973 created the Dravidian style and Rekhanagara style of architectural monuments. One of the richest traditions in Indian architecture took shape in the Deccan during this time and one writer calls it Karnataka Dravida style as opposed to traditional Dravida style. Pattadakal UNESCO World Heritage Site and the Navalinga temples are the structural types of the Rashtrakutas.

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The best known Virupaksha Temple, earliest of the temples in the Chalukyan series, was built by Queen Lokamahadevi in 745 to commemorate her husband's victory (Vikramaditya II 733 – 746) over the Pallavas of Kanchi. The temple closely resembles the Kailashnatha temple in Kanchi which served as a model for this temple. The Virupakhsa Temple in turn served as an inspiration for the Kailashnatha Temple built by the Rashtrakuta dynasty in Ellora.

The Virupaksha Temple is rich in sculptures like those of Lingodbhava, Nataraja, Ravananugraha and Ugranarasimha. It is stated by the Archaeological Survey of India that the tall vimana with axial mandapas and peripheral sub-shrines round the court, enclosed by a wall with gopura-entrances in front and behind were all designed and completed at one time. Adoptions from the Shore Temple at Mahabalipuram in the form of kuta and said–heads has an impressive view from a distance.

Sangameshvara Temple

Sangameshvara Temple built by King Vijayaditya Satyashraya is incomplete, yet attractive. It is the oldest temple built by Vijayaditya Satyashraya (697 – 733) exhibits in its vimana a large degree of the contemporary Pallava temples in the southerly elements, as in the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temples. The temple is square on plan from the base to shikhara similar to Virupaksha Temple, has no sukanasika but the vimana has three storeys. The lowermost storey is surrounded by two walls, the inner and outer, the second storey being an upward projection of the inner wall, while the outer wall encloses the covered circumambulatory round the sanctum.

Galaganatha Temple

Galaganatha Temple, facing east, built around 750, in the finely evolved rekha-nagara prasada style of architecture contains a sculpture of Lord Shiva killing the demon Andhakasura. The temple, built on a plinth with three highly ornate mouldings, comprises a sanctum (garbhagriha) which a linga and a vestibule (antarala), both surrounded by a closed

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circumambulatory path (pradakshinapatha), a hall (sabha–mandapa) and an entrance porch (mukhamandapa). The most striking feature of the temple is its well-preserved northern superstructure (rekha-nagara shikhara), topped by amalaka and kalasha. The sculpture housed in this pavilion is that of Siva slaying Andhakasura. The eight-armed god wears a wreath of human skulls (munda-mala) like a sacred thread (yajnopavita) and is depicted as piercing the demon with the trident (trisula).

Papanatha Temple

The Papanatha Temple, built around 740, as per Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) records, is in the Vesara style. The temple was started in nagara style but later changed to a more balanced Dravidian style. Sculptures here depict scenes from Ramayana and Mahabharatha. The temple's plan has a sanctum (garbhagriha) surrounded by a circumambulatory path (pradakshinapatha) with devakoshtha pavilions in its three walls, an ardha-mandapa, a sabha-mandapa and an entrance porch (mukhamandapa) provided with kakshasana. A well-developed rekha-nagara (northern) shikhara with an elaborately carved Chaitya-arch enshriningNataraja on the frontage of the sukanasa is a special feature at this temple. This temple has many similarities with the Navabrahma temples in Alampur, Andhra Pradesh, which were also built by the same dynasty.

Archaeological studies of all the Pattadakal temples show that some have the stellar (multigonal) plan later to be used profusely by the Hoysalas of Belur and Halebidu. Another fine monument at Pattadakal is the Navalinga temple at Kuknur.

Navalinga Temple

The Navalinga Temple was built in the 9th century, during the reign of King Amoghavarsha I or his son Krishna II of the Rashtrakuta Dynasty. The temple is located in the town of Kukkanur, 40 km away from Gadag. Built in the South Indian Dravidian architecture style, each of the nine temples in the

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cluster has a linga, the universal symbol of Hindu God Shiva, and hence the name Navalinga (lit nine lingas).

Western Chalukya architecture

Western Chalukya architecture

Western Chalukya architecture also known as Kalyani Chalukya or Later Chalukya architecture, is the distinctive style of ornamented architecture in the Shaiva, Vaishnava, and Jain religious traditions that evolved during the rule of the Western Chalukya Empire in the Tungabhadra region of central Karnataka, in the 11th and 12th centuries. Western Chalukyan political influence was at its peak in the Deccan Plateau during this period. The centre of cultural and temple building activity lay in the Tungabhadra region, where large medieval workshops built numerous monuments. These monuments, regional variants of pre-existing Dravida (South Indian) temples, defined the Karnata dravida tradition.

Temples of all sizes built by the Chalukyan architects during this era remain today, known as a transitional style and provides an architectural link between the style of the early Chalukya dynasty and that of the later Hoysala Empire.

Lakkundi temples

Further information: Gadag

Lakkundi in Gadag district is a tiny village on the way to Hospet from Hubli. It is one of the fine architectural feasts of the Kalyana Chalukya period (about 10th century). Currently Lakkundi has about 50 temples of various stature and antiquity. All the temples are made of green schist and the outer walls and entrances are very richly decorated. The shikhara is an in-between-style type and the parapet and the artistic division of the wall with pilasters is typical of the south-Indian style. It is also known for Step wells and historic inscriptions. The centre of cultural and temple building activity lay in the Tungabhadra region, where large medieval workshops built numerous monuments. These monuments, regional variants

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of pre-existing Dravida (South Indian) temples, defined the Karnataka Dravida tradition.

Kashivisvanatha Temple

A great deal of care has gone into the construction of the Kashivisvanatha Temple in Lakkundi, which deifies Shiva. This temple has a unique feature: a small Surya (Sun) shrine faces the main shrine on the west. There is a common platform between both, which must have been an open mandapa originally. Hence, the Kashivisvanatha Temple has an entrance on the east side and south side of the mandapa. The entrance doorway and the towers are covered with close intricate carvings. The shikhara (dome) is in the North-Indian style and it looks like a lathe must have been used to make the complex circular pillars.

BRAHMA JAINALAYA

Brahma Jaina Basti built by queen Attimabbe is the largest and oldest of many Jain temples in Lakkundi. This temple is dedicated to Mahavira, the most revered saint of Jainism. The temple has a garbhagriha shrine and mandapa style with deep beams on the mandapa from where the eaves are cantilevered. The large Jaina temple, among the many temples at Lakkundi, also near Gadag, is perhaps one of the earliest examples of temples in this area built of a kind of fine-textured chloritic schist as distinct from the hitherto-used sandstone of this region.

The new material, because of its less thick quarry-sizes and tractability, reacted on the workmanship, with the result that the masonry-courses became reduced in size and the carvings more delicate and highly finished. The temple, perhaps built in the latter half of the 11th century, has a five-storeyed vimana (tower), square on plan from the base to the shikhara, and had originally a closed square navaranga in front, though an open mandapa was added in front later on. The central bay of the navaranga is a larger square than the peripheral eight around it. The second storey, as in the Jaina temple at Pattadakkal, is functional and has an antarala-mantapa in front over the vestibule of the lower storey. This raises the total height of the vimana considerably.

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Mahadeva Temple

Mahadeva Temple at Itagi in the Koppal district, built in 1112, is an example of Dravida articulation with a nagara superstructure, dedicated to Shiva and is among the larger temples built by the Western Chalukyas and perhaps the most famous. Inscriptions hail it as the 'Emperor among temples'. Here, the main temple, the sanctum of which has a linga, is surrounded by thirteen minor shrines, each with its own linga. The temple has two other shrines, dedicated to Murthinarayana and Chandraleshwari, parents of Mahadeva, the Chalukya commanders who consecrated the temple in 1112.

Siddhesvara Temple

Siddhesvara Temple at Haveri, has a staggered square plan with dravida articulation and superstructure of 11th century vintage, to which some innovative 12th century elements such as aedicules, miniature decorative towers on pilasters, were added. The temple is built of soapstone. The temple bears close resemblance to a few other Chalukyan temples in the vicinity of Haveri; the Muktesvara Temple at Chavudayyadanapura, the Somesvara Temple at Haralhalli and the Siddharamesvara Temple at Niralgi. The entire basement of this temple has sunk by a few feet, making it necessary to descend into the openmantapa (hall).

Dodda Basappa Temple

The Dodda Basappa Temple at Dambal, a 12th-century Chalukyan temple, is of the Western Chalukya architectural style. It has a unique 24-pointed, uninterrupted stellate (star-shaped), 7-tiered dravida plan, for the vimana with so many star points that it almost becomes circular in appearance. Each right angle is divided into four 22.5 degrees angles. Then each angle is again divided and covered with intricate carvings.

Trikuteshwara Shiva Temple

The Trikuteshwara Shiva Temple at Gadag, dated between 1050 and 1200, has ornate pillars with intricate sculpture with three Shivalingas enshrined in the sanctum. It

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has three lingas mounted on the same stone. Beautifully chiselled stone screens and carved figurines are also seen in the temple. The Saraswati shrine within the Trikuteshwara temple complex has exquisite stone columns.

Sudi monuments

Further information: Ron, Karnataka

Sudi is famous for rare stone-carved monuments like twin-towered temple with large well built stone carvings. At one time it was a key town of the Kalyani Chalukyas, during 1000. Besides these structures there is a tower (called Hude in native language) located in the centre of the Sudi village. Several stone temples built by Maha Samanthadhipati Naga Deva in 1100 have caught the attention of Karnataka State Archaeological Department. Quite a few of these structures have been cleaned up.

Hoysala architecture

Hoysala architecture

The Hoysala architecture style is an offshoot of the Western Chalukya style, which was popular in the 10th and 11th centuries. It is distinctively Dravidian, and owing to its unique features, Hoysala architecture qualifies as an independent style. The Hoysala sculpture in all its richness is said to be a challenge to photography. The artistry of the Hoysalas in stone has been compared to the finesse of an ivory worker or agoldsmith. The abundance of jewellery worn by the sculpted figures and the variety of hairstyles and headdresses depicted give a fair idea of the lifestyles of the Hoysala times.

Some of the famous temples of the Hoysala architectural style are the Kesava Temple at Somanathapura, Chennakesava Temple at Belur, Chikkamagalur Amruthapura Temple, Chennakesava Temple at Aralaguppe, the Hoysaleswara Temple at Halebidu, Cheluvanarayana Swamy Temple at Melkote.

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Somanathapura

Somanathapura is famous for the Chennakesava Temple (also called Kesava or Keshava Temple) built by Soma, a dandanayaka (commander) in 1268 under Hoysala king Narasimha III, when the Hoysalas were the major power in South India. The Keshava Temple is one of the finest examples of Hoysala architecture and is in a very well preserved condition. Somnathpur, however, is truly unique in design, perfect in symmetry and the stone carvings are remarkable marvels in stone.

Chennakesava Temple at Belur

The Chennakesava Temple at Belur, originally called Vijayanarayana Temple, built on the banks of the Yagachi River in Belur, an early capital of the Hoysala Empire, is one of the finest examples of Hoysala architecture. It was built by king Vishnuvardhana in commemoration of his victory over the Cholas at Talakad in 1117. The facade of the temple is filled with intricate sculptures and friezes with no portion left blank. Inside the temple are a number of ornate pillars. The temple is about 30 metres (98 ft) in height and has an impressive entrance gopuram (tower), built in Dravidian style. A group of subsidiary shrines surround the main shrine in the centre of a rectangular navaranga (hall). The navaranga (hall) supported by forty-six pillars, each of a different design, has three entrances guarded by decorated doorkeepers.

Hoysaleswara Temple

The Hoysaleswara Temple at Halebidu, was built by Ketamala and attributed to Vishnuvardhana. The temple complex comprises two Hindu temples, the Hoysaleshawara and Kedareshwara temples and two Jainbasadis. It enshrines Hoysaleswara and Shantaleswara, named after the temple builder Vishnuvardhana Hoysala and his wife, Queen Shantala.

The Hoysaleswara Temple, dating back to the 1121, is astounding for its wealth of sculptural details. The temple is a simple dvikuta vimana (two-shrined), one for "Hoysaleswara" and the other for "Shantaleswara" (after Shantala Devi, queen

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of king Vishnuvardhana) and is built with chloritic chist (also known as soapstone). The temple complex as a whole is elevated on a jagati (platform), a feature that became popular in contemporary Hoysala designs. The walls of the temple are covered with an endless variety of depictions from Hindu mythology, animals, birds and Shilabalikas or dancing figures. Yet no two sculptures of the temple are the same. This magnificent temple guarded by a Nandi Bull was never completed, despite 86 years of labour. The temple of Halebidu, has been described as an "outstanding example of Hindu architecture" and as the "supreme climax of Indian architecture".

Ishvara Temple

The Ishvara Temple in Arasikere, dates to 1220 rule of Hoysala Empire. Arasikere (lit "Queens tank"; 'Arasi' means "queen" or "princess" and 'kere' means "tank" in the Kannada language). The temple, though modest in size and figure sculpture, is considered the most complex in architecture among surviving Hoysala monuments because of its ground plan: a 16-pointed star shaped mantapa (hall), in addition to an asymmetrical star shaped shrine, whose star points are of three different types.

The temple, which faces east like all Hoysala constructions, uses soapstone as basic building material and is a ekakuta shrine (single shrine or cella) with two mantapas, one open and one closed. All three units are connected to form a unity. The elegantly decorated ceilings, the domical ceiling of the open mantapa, the sculptures of Dwarapalakas (door keepers) in the closed mantapa (also called navaranga), the wall panel images numbering 120 (on pilasters between aedicules–miniature towers) carved on the outer walls are noteworthy.

Melkote Cheluvanarayana Swamy Temple

The Cheluvanarayana Swamy Temple, located in Melkote built on rocky hills is a square building of large dimensions but very plain, dedicated to Lord Cheluva-Narayana Swamy or Tirunarayana. Mysore Archaeological Department states,

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on the strength of epigraphic evidence, that the presiding deity of this temple was already a well known idol of worship before Sri Ramanujacharya, the Srivaishnava saint worshipped at the shrine in December 1098 and even before he came to the Mysore region and that very probably he used his influence to rebuild or renovate the temple. The temple is richly endowed, having been under the special patronage of the Mysore Wodeyars, and has a most valuable collection of jewels.

Lakshminarasimha Swamy Temple

The Lakshminarasimha Swamy Temple is a good example of a richly decorated Hoysala temple built in the trikuta (three towers) vimana (prayer hall) style with fine sculptures adorning the walls. The material used is Chloritic Schist (Soapstone) and the temple is built on a jagati (platform) that closely follows the plan of the temple. This is a Hoysala innovation. The Jagati is in perfect unity with the rest of the temple and the temple is built on a jagati (platform) that closely follows the plan of the temple. The size of the original temple can be considered small, to which a larger open mantapa (hall) was later added. The three shrines are located around a central closed mantapa with 9 bays. The ceiling of the closed mantapa is supported by four lathe turned pillars and is deeply domed in the centre. The ceiling of the closed mantapa is supported by four lathe turned pillars and is deeply domed in the centre. The central shrine is the most prominent and has a large tower. This shrine has a vestibule that connects the shrine to the mandapa. Consequently, the vestibule also has a tower that looks like an extension of the main tower and is called the sukanasi or nose. The other two shrines have smaller towers and because they have no vestibule to connect them to the central mantapa, they have no sukanasi.

Rameshwara Temple at Keladi

The Keladi Nayakas (period: 1499 – 1763) built some fine temples in Ikkeri and Keladi using a combination of late Kadamba, Hoysala, Vijayanagara and Dravida styles. The use ofgranite for their construction shows that they simply

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followed the Vijayanagar model of architecture. The Aghoreshwara Temple at Ikkeri and the Rameshwara Temple at Keladi are the best examples of the Nayakas' art. Vijayanagar-style pillars with hippogryphs are common; called yali columns (depiction of horses and lions as seen in Hampi) is found here. These are pillars with lions, either with their forepaws raised or simply in a sitting position, and pillars with a mythical horse-like animal with front legs raised, balancing on its rear legs, and with an armed rider on its back. A roof sculpture depicting a Gandaberunda (see image in infobox), the mythical two-headed bird of Karnataka, symbol of the state, is found in Keladi.

Aghoreshwara Temple

At Ikkeri, in the citadel, a palace was built with mud and timber, adorned with carvings. Today what remains is the Aghoreshvara Temple (one of the several names of Lord Shiva), in Ikkeri (was the capital of Keladi Nayakas). It is a large and well proportioned stone-building, constructed in a mixed style with a unique conception. There are carvings and sculptures such as Temple Relief (sculpture consisting of shapes carved on a surface so as to stand out from the surrounding background), erotica, figurines, old Kannada Manuscript, sculpted elephant, etc. There are intricate carvings on the stone walls of the temple.

Yalis sculpted on the pillars of the Aghoreswara and Rameshwara temples depict mythical lion and it has been widely used in south Indian sculpture. Description and references to yalis is very old, but its depiction in the south Indian sculpture became prominent from the 16th century as seen in the Nayaka period temples. Yalis are believed to be more powerful than the lion or the elephant.

The Rameshwara Temple at Keladi was built in the Hoysala-Dravida style. This temple is made of stone and is on the banks of the Tunga River. The sanctum sanctorum of the temple has a Lingam, which is said to have been installed by Sage Parashurama himself.

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Architecture of Kingdom of Mysore

Architecture of Kingdom of Mysore

The Kingdom of Mysore was subordinate to Vijayanagara Empire until 1565 and princely state under the paramouncy of the British Raj after 1799. The architectural designs were in the Indo-Saracenic – blends of Hindu,Muslimor Islamic, Rajput, and Gothic styles of architecture under the Wodeyar Dynasty or Kingdom of Mysore from 1399 to 1947.

Indo-Saracenic type is most notably manifested in palaces and courtly buildings built in various styles, and temples built in the Dravidian style. It is the city of Mysore that is best known for its royal palaces, earning it the nickname "City of Palaces". The city's main palace, the Mysore Palace, was designed by the English architect Henry Irwin in 1897. The palace's exterior is Indo-Saracenic in style but the wealth of detail inside is distinctly ofHoysala. Domes, arches, colonnades and carved pillars, as well as its size, add to this palace's notability. The octagonal Kalyana mantapa (Marriage Hall) on the ground floor has 26 canvas paintings on its walls depicting the Dassera procession. On the first floor, a marble staircase leads to a grand colonnaded Durbar hall containing famous paintings, including one of the Hindu god Vishnu on the ceiling. The opulent Amba Vilas hall, with its carved teakwood ceiling, white marble floors, semi-precious inlay work in the Agra style, silver door with a depiction of the dashavatara and dikpalas (guardians), teak doors inlaid with ivory, Belgian stained glass, cast iron pillars from Glasgow, etched glass windows and chandeliers are worthy of mention.

The other palaces in Mysore are:

The Lalitha Mahal Palace, built in 1921 by E.W. Fritchley in the architectural style Renaissance, exhibits concepts from English manor houses and Italian palazzos, with the central dome believed to have been modelled on St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

The Jaganmohan Palace, mostly in the Hindu style built in the middle of the 19th century noted for its ornamental pavilion (called the Wedding Pavilion), and has an elegant façade with

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three large entrances; the Jayalakshmi Vilas Palace built in the Corinthian style consisting of a three-winged building with two Corinthian and Ionic columns; the sculptures of the Hindu goddess Lakshmi on the north side and of the goddess Bhuvaneshwari on the south side are particularly notable.

The Karanji Vilas mansion (1932), an Indo-Greek style building; the Cheluvamba Mansion (1910)- an imposing yet balanced structure, its main façade contains twin towers flanking semi-circular columnedverandas on the ground and first floors.

The Maharaja's summer palace (1880), is called the Lokaranjan Mahal that initially served as a school for royalty.

The Rajendra Vilas Palace (1938) is built in the Indo-British style atop the Chamundi Hill.

Other royal mansions built by the Mysore rulers were the Chittaranjan Mahal in Mysore and the Bangalore Palace in Bangalore, a structure built on the lines of England's Windsor Castle.

Surrounding the main palace in Mysore and inside the fort are five temples, built in various periods namely, the Prasanna Krishnaswamy Temple (1829), the Lakshmiramana Swamy Temple, the oldest of the fort temples (existed prior to 1499); the Trinesvara Swamy Temple, built for the three-eyed god Shiva, existed since the time of King Raja Wodeyar and was renovated by successive kings; the Shweta Varaha Swamy Temple is unique in that it contains many aspects of Hoysala architecture; and the Prasanna Venkataramana Swami Temple, a Vishnu temple containing 12 murals of the Wodeyar rulers, built by Subbaraya Dasa, an officer of Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, in 1836.

CHAMUNDESHWARI TEMPLE

Chamundeshwari Temple, famous among the kingdom's temples, is located atop the Chamundi Hills about 13 kilometres (8.1 mi) from the palace city of Mysore, over a climb of 1000 steps. The original shrine is said to have been built in the 12th century by Hoysala rulers while its tower was probably built by the Vijayanagar rulers and Wodeyars of Mysore. The temple

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has a seven story tall 'gopuram' (tower built in 1827) decorated with intricate carvings. The idol of the Chamundeshwari or Durga, the fierce form of Shakthi, is called the Goddess of Mysore as it was the tutelary deity of the Mysore Maharajas. It is said to be made of solid gold and the temple gates are made of silver. There is a huge granite Nandi (Bull) on the 800th step on the hill in front of a small Shiva temple, a short distance away. This Nandi is over 4.63 metres (15.2 ft) high, and 7.41 metres (24.3 ft) long and around its neck are exquisite bells.

Neo-Gothic cathedral architecture or church architecture

St. Philomena's Church was built between 1933 and 1956 in honour of St. Philomena in the city of Mysore, India. It was constructed using a Neo-Gothic style and its architecture designed by a Frenchman by name Daly was inspired by the Cologne Cathedral in Germany. A history of St. Philomena's church is provided by Saint Philomena, a saint and martyr of the Roman Catholic Church, is said to have been a young Greek princess martyred in the 4th century. A relic of the saint from Peter Pisani, Apostolic Delegate of the East Indies was handed over to Father Cochet who approached the Mysore king to assist him in constructing a church in honour of St. Philomena. The Maharaja of Mysore laid the foundation stone of the church on 28 October 1933. In his speech on the day of the inauguration, the Maharaja is quoted to have said: "The new church will be strongly and securely built upon a double foundation — divine compassion and the eager gratitude of men." The construction of the church was completed under Bishop Rene Fuga's supervision. The relic of Saint Philomena is preserved in a catacomb below the main altar.

The floor plan of the cathedral resembles a cross. The long part of the Cross is the congregation hall called the nave. The two arms of the cross are the transepts. The part containing the altar and the choir is the crossing. The cathedral has a crypt that houses a statue of St. Philomena. The Church has a length of about 50 metres (160 ft) and has twin spires that are 50 metres (160 ft) in height and they resemble the spires of the Cologne Cathedral and also the spires of the St. Patrick's Church in New York.

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Muslim Architecture – Tipu Sultan's rule

The Masjid-e-Ala or Jama Masjid was built by Tipu Sultan in 1784 and has minarets mounted on a tall platform. It has two storeys and is octagonal in shape with pigeonholes surmounted by domes. The walls and ceilings are decorated with Persian scriptures in finecalligraphy.

Indo-Saracenic architecture

Tipu Sultan built the Dariya Daulat Palace in the Dariya Daulat Bhag (literally the "garden of the wealth of the sea") in 1784. Built in the Indo-Saracenic style, the palace is known for its intricate woodwork and paintings. The west wall of the palace is covered with murals depicting Tipu Sultan's victory over Colonel Baillie's army at the Pollilur, near Kanchipuram in 1780.

Sikh architecture

The earliest Sikh Gurudwara in Karnataka is the Gurudwara Nanak Jhira at Bidar. It was built in traditional Sikh architecture style, at a sacred place located at Bidar in Bidar District. It is also called Nanak Jhira, where Jhira means a spring of water exists. Legend says that Guru Nanak halted here on his way to Sri Lanka in 1512. During that period, people of Bidar were suffering from shortage of drinking water. A fountain of cool water rose out from a hill by the spiritual power of Guru Nanak. A committee took up development work of Gurudwara Nanak Jhira Sahib with the central three-storey building completed in 1966, which encases the historic Nanak Jhira spring divined by Gurunanak. The water of the fountain is collected in 'Amrit-Khud' (a tank of potion), built in white marble. There is a Sikh museum, built in the memory of Guru Tegh Bahadur, depicting the important events of Sikh history through pictures and paintings. There is a Sikh museum, built in the memory of Guru Tegh Bahadur, depicting the important events of Sikh history through pictures and paintings. Built in the Sikh architecture style, the Gurdwara is a lively blend of the Mughal and Rajput styles. Onion-shaped domes, multi-foil arches, paired pilasters, in-

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lay work, frescoes, etc. are of Mughal extraction, more specially of Shah Jahan's period, while oriel windows, bracket supported eaves at the string-course, chattris, richly ornamented friezes, etc., are derived from elements of Rajput architecture such as is seen in Jaipur, Jodhpur,Bikaner and other places in Rajasthan.

Apart from the above ancient Gurudwara at Bidar, Bangalore city also has Gurudwaras dated to 20th century. Guru Nanak, the Sikh Guru, was the first Sikh to visit Bengaluru. On his way back from Sri Lanka he halted at Bangalore. Kempegowda, the builder of Bangalore, met him and sought his blessings. Gurunanak not only blessed Kempegowda but also told him to develop the place. But it took many more years for a Sikh Gurudwara to be built in Bangalore. There are now three Gurudwaras in Bangalore. The first Sikh Gurudwara and the largest in Bangalore near the Ulsoor Lake on the Kensington Road, is an elegant and white structure, which was opened on 13 April 1946. It has been renovated recently with marble floors.

Buddhist culture & architecture

While under the Mauryas and Satavahanas Buddhism prospered in Karnataka, the influence of Hinduism expanded as it subsumed most of the teachings of Buddha and Buddhism and thus Buddhism lost its distinct uniqueness in the state. However, in the 20th century, Buddha viharas have been established in the State with Bangalore recording two such viharas.

The Maha Bodhi Society (MBS) was established by Acharya Buddharakkhita in 1956 at Bangalore with the objective of propagating the teachings of the Buddha and to provide the inspiration and facilities for putting that teaching into practice through spiritual, social, educational activities. The first act of the Acharya was to plant a sampling of the holy Bodhi tree from Bodh Gaya at the premises of the proposed Society. This tree has grown with the Society and is venerated. The Maha Bodhi Society Temple, a relatively new structure, was then built with the main shrine replicating the historic tower at Bodh Gaya. Temple as built is a brick structure with a central tower of 55 m

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(180.4 ft) height. The Stupa that represents a basic factor in the teaching of the Buddha has also been built at the entrance to the temple, which is made of granite and it enshrines a relic of the Buddha. The temple, the stupa and the Bodhi tree in the temple complex now form a unique landmark in Bangalore. It is a place of worship and meditation, a centre of pilgrimage for people from all over India and other countries.

Tibetan Buddhist culture & architecture

Apart from the Indian Buddhist traditions in the form of Viharas seen in various parts of the country, Tibetan Buddhist monasteries have also made a lasting impact in Karnataka with the influx of refugees from Tibet who were settled in Bylakuppe. One of the famous monasteries is the Namdroling monastery, built as per traditional Tibetan architecture, which is located in Bylakuppe near Kushalnagar in Kodagu in Karnataka. This spectacular Tibetan Golden Temple is a major tourist spot in the area. It is termed the 'Charming mini Tibet near Madikeri'. Tibetan refugees have both recreated their lifestyle as well as adapted to the local conditions around the monasteries. Huge golden statues, bright coloured wall paintings all around, gigantic dragons on the pillars in a high and big hall are a sight to behold.

A lineage of Tibetan Buddhism in the world, the monastery is home to a sangha community of over five thousand lamas (both monks and nuns), a religious college (or shedra) and hospital. Themonastery was established by Penor Rinpoche (construction started in 1963 and inaugurated in 1999).

Built in typical Tibetan architecture style with Chinese and Indian influences, the monastery reflects a deeply Buddhist approach. It has the Buddhist mandatory Prayer wheel, along with two deer or dragons, same as can be seen on nearly every Gompa in Tibet. Tibetan art, a form of sacred art, in the form of the exquisitely detailed statues to wooden carvings to the intricate designs of the Thangka paintings (a syncrestism of Chinese scroll-painting with Nepalese and Kashmiri painting) are seen in this monastery.

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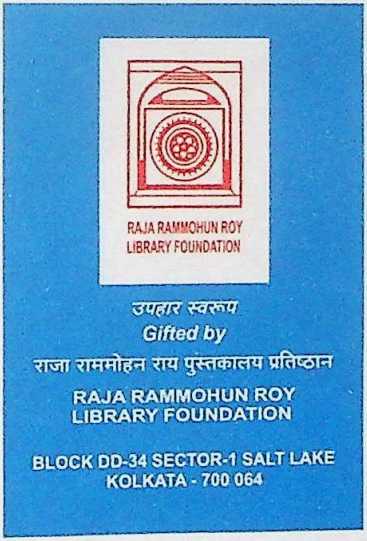

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rectangular, octagonal, semicircular – with different types of domes and gates. Temples in southern India have a different style than those in northern India. Although the architecture of Hindu temples is varied, they mainly have many things in common.

This growth phase of Hindu temples charts its rise and fall alongside the fate of the various dynasties that reigned India during the period majorly contributing and influencing the building of temples, especially in South India. Hindus consider the building of temples an extremely pious act, bringing great religious merit. Hence kings and wealthy men were eager to sponsor the construction of temples, notes Swami Harshananda, and the various steps of building the shrines were performed as religious rites.

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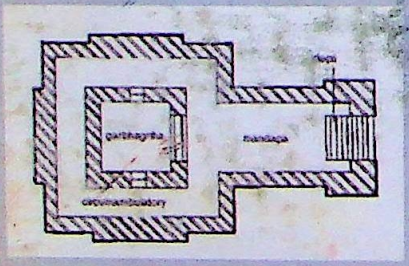
Elements of Hindu temple



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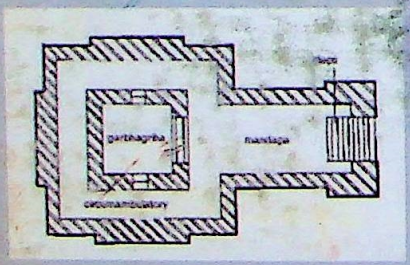
Elements of Hindu temple



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